

Youth Spiritual Competition 2023

The Council of Chalcedon

College Edition

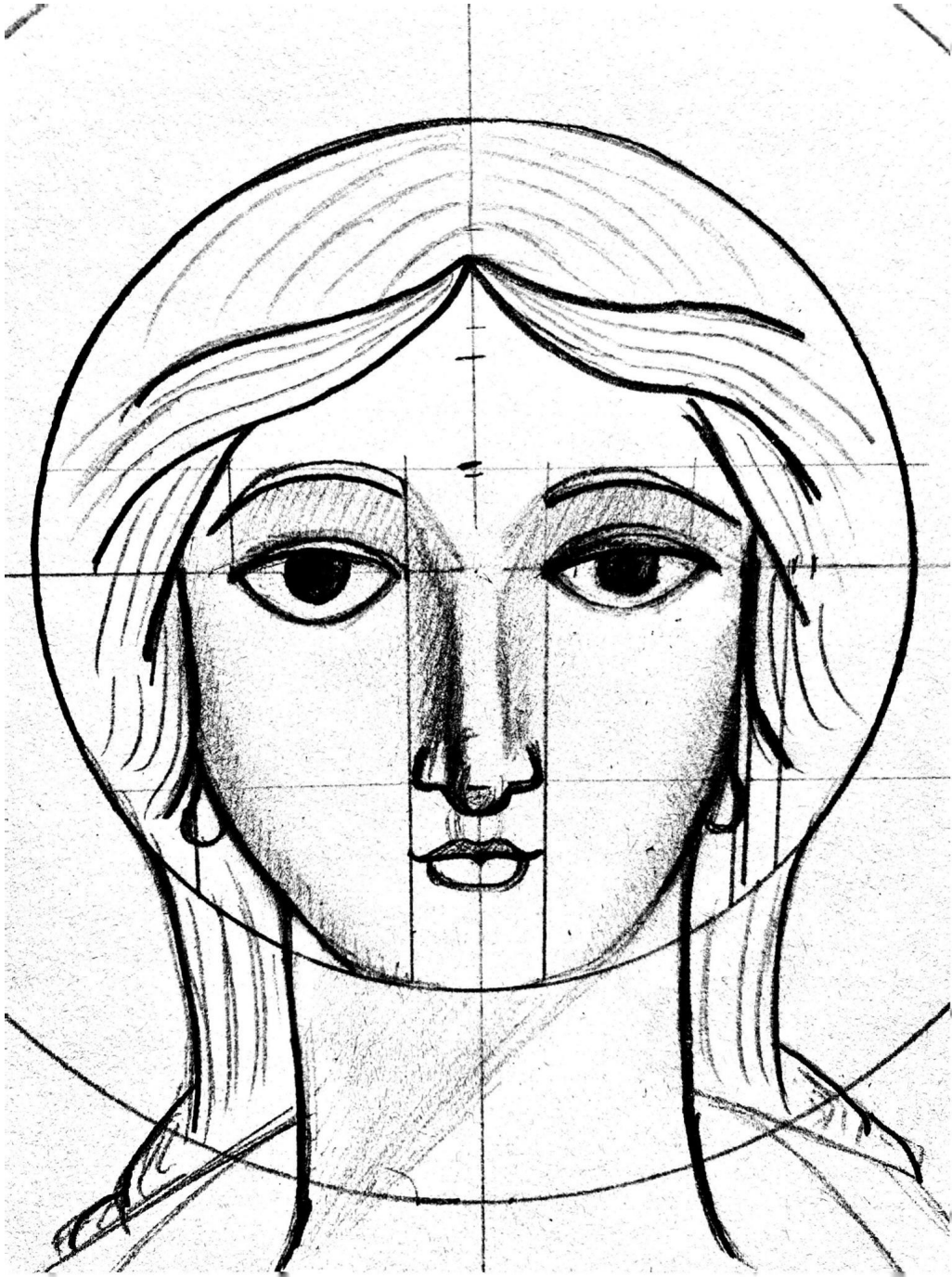


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Chapter 1: Christology before Chalcedon

Introduction

The great challenge of early Christian theology was to reconcile and express how God may be Three but also be One. This stumped many early thinkers. How could God be Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, yet He be called One God? What was the relationship of the Father to the Son? The Father to the Holy Spirit? The Son to the Holy Spirit? How could one distinguish any of these three? Is one greater than another? Can the one name be shared? And if not, then what qualities or attributes distinguish each?

Is the Son equally God with the Father? And yet is the Son not the Father? What is the difference between the two? Is the Son less than the Father? And yet He is greater than the creation. Is He a perfect creature or a deified man? Or has God taken three forms throughout history, with the Son being the second form of God? These questions were raised throughout history, and it was the responsibility of the Church to provide an answer.

The issue of how to distinguish the Father from the Son has caused some throughout history to resort to a concept called **subordination**. While a blanket term, *subordination* may manifest itself in two ways: to either ascribe superiority or dominance to God the Father in relationship to the Son, or to declare some kind of inferiority of the Son to the Father. While the one extreme of the theological issue will define the Son of a different essence/substance than the Father, another side of the Christological issue will deny that the Son can take flesh.

More so Christological, the questions shifted to how God could become man. Did Jesus take flesh? Is that flesh a mere phantom or illusion? If God took flesh, then did His nature change? Did He stop being God? If He is still God and yet man, are there two beings? If these natures are united, is one lost and the other dominant? These were the sort of questions that led to Chalcedon.

We will begin our study of Chalcedon by surveying the various answers to the above questions as they relate to that Council. We will examine the various heresies as well as Ecumenical Councils to see how the Church arrived to the point in history where She would be divided on the issue of the nature of Christ.

Monarchianism

From the end of the second century, a movement called “**Monarchianism**” gained traction. This heresy, stemming from the term *monarchy*, described the defense of the unity or oneness of God. While monarchianism originally developed as a means to guard the Christian understanding of the unity of God in the face of accusations of polytheism, it quickly devolved into a heresy that denied God as Trinity, especially with its rejection of the independence of the Logos of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. This theological movement initially attacked the Logos, claiming that the divinity of Christ cannot be distinguished from that of the Father since any such distinction would threaten the unity of God or “monarchy.” This specific group of monarchians

were attributed the label “allogoi” since they rejected the Logos of God. In turn, they rejected the Gospel of John since this evangelist presented Christ as the Logos of the Father.

From the allogoi heresy came two more heretical doctrines:

1. Dynamic Monarchianism
2. Modalistic Monarchianism

Dynamic Monarchianism, also called *Adoptionism*, traditionally referred to the attempt to preserve the divine unity by claiming that the divinity that was in Christ was an impersonal power proceeding from God, but was not very God.¹ They believed Jesus Christ was God only in the sense that a power (Gk. *dynamis*) or influence came upon Him from the Father. They believed that the man Jesus was thus "adopted" by the Father and raised to the level of God. A few men championed this doctrine between the second and fourth centuries, such as Theodotus and Paul of Samosata.

For Theodotus, Jesus was a mere man born through Virgin Mary through the divine will and was invested with the impersonal power of divinity at His baptism. He believed during His baptism, the man Jesus was filled with the heavenly Christ, a spirit, which allowed Him to perform miracles.

For Paul of Samosata, the Father was God, the Son was a mere man, and the Holy Spirit was grace given to the Apostles. The Logos, the expression of God's immanent rationality,² descended upon the man, Jesus, born of Mary, but their mode of union was simply coming together.³ Since the union between the Logos and the human Jesus was simply coming together, Jesus was not divine. Rather, He achieved the title “Son of God” through merit by living an exceptionally moral, perfect life. Paul of Samosata's Adoptionist heresy was condemned by a local council⁴ in Antioch in 268.⁵

The other heresy to spring forth from allogoi was *Modalistic Monarchianism*, which could be described as the polar opposite of Dynamic Monarchianism. The Modalist Monarchians, who were later called Sabellians after this view was championed by Sabellius, believed that the only difference between the Divine Persons in the Godhead (i.e., the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) was a shift in "mode" or "operation." Such a view denies the reality and uniqueness of each Divine Person of the Holy Trinity. Whereas Dynamic Monarchianism purported that the divinity within

¹ Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought. Volume I, from the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon.* 2nd ed., Abingdon Press, 1987, 144.

² According to Paul of Samosata's idea of immanent rationality or “immanent reason of God,” the Wisdom or Word of God dwelt in Jesus, but this Word was no more than the reason or purpose of God, which also dwelt in Moses and the prophets. “God's presence in Jesus is only quantitatively different from what it has been or can be in others. Jesus is in no way divine, but is rather ‘from below.’ The union between Jesus and the Word is simply a moral union, in such a way that the Word dwelt in Jesus ‘as in a temple.’” See Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought. Volume I, from the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon.* 2nd ed., Abingdon Press, 1987, 249-50/

³ Davis, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology.* The Liturgical Press, 1990, 40-41.

⁴ Alternatively, a synod.

⁵ Commemorated Paope 19 in Synaxarion. There are several different dates offered for this council. In reality, there were multiple local synods dealing with Paul of Samosata starting from around 264.

Christ was some impersonal force or power, Modalist Monarchianism did not deny the full divinity of Christ, but identified such divinity with the Father. This heresy was also called “Patripassianism,” meaning that the “Father suffered” since they maintain that the Father suffered on the cross. The champion of modalistic monarchianism was Sabellius, who would make this heresy all his own.

Sabellianism

In the early third century, a heretic named Sabellius denied all distinctions within the Godhead and instead affirmed that the Son and the Spirit were simply “modes” in which God appeared for the purposes of redemption and inspiration.⁶ Summarizing an account from Hippolytus describing this heresy:

Sabellius claimed that the Logos Himself is the Son who is given the name Father, but there is only one undivided spirit who is God; Father and Logos are one and the same. The Spirit, clothed with flesh in the virgin, is one and the same as the Father. What is visible, namely the man, is the Son, but the Spirit who descended upon the Son is the Father. It was the Father who deified the flesh and made it one with Himself, so that Father and Son, one person, suffered together.⁷

While it is difficult to really know what Sabellius taught, it was most likely that he referenced the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as one person. Some scholars believe Sabellius taught that in the Old Testament, God was in the form of the Father; from the New Testament to the Ascension, He was the Son; and from Pentecost to the present day, He took the form of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, by technicality, Sabellians hold that the Son is God and that God is one since they deny that each person of the Trinity is a distinct person. However, they wrongly teach that God, Who is one “*person*,” has taken three forms over the course of human history. This usage of “person” will prove to be problematic as the Church attempts to form a vocabulary that would require distinguishing person from substance (or “essence”) to describe the Holy Trinity and the Godhead.

Sabellianism did not sit well with many of the early Orthodox writers, but they lacked the proper expressions to show that God is three in one without meaning that He took different forms throughout time. As we usually see in Christological debates, one extreme leads to another. While Sabellius held the Father “so equal” to the Son that they were essentially the same, a few resorted to “subordination,” stating that the Father is greater than the Son. While these writers were successful in distinguishing the Father from the Son, they did so at the expense of making the Son lower than, or subordinate to, the Father. Although at this time the Christological errors were rather subtle, the heresy of subordination would come to a head with the Arian heresy in the fourth century.

⁶ Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought. Volume I, from the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*. 2nd ed., Abingdon Press, 1987, 145.

⁷ Davis, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. The Liturgical Press, 1990, 42.

The Arian Heresy

In the fourth century, the heretic Arius attempted to distinguish the Father from the Son by claiming that the Son was created by the Father as a perfect creature. In 318, Bishop Alexander and Arius disagreed on the issue of whether the Logos, the Word of God, was coeternal with God.⁸ Arius argued that there was a time when the Son was not (i.e., did not exist), meaning that the Father created the Son before the rest of the creation. According to Arius, the Son is not coeternal with the Father. To be clear, Arius accepted that the Son preexisted the rest of creation, existing before the creation, but for Arius, the Son was nonetheless one of the Father's creations. However, Alexander accurately demonstrated that the Word was divine and not created, and therefore is coeternal with the Father.⁹

In 319, Arius wrote a letter to his future ally and representative, Bishop Eusebius of Nicomedia, describing his position regarding the eternity of the Father and the beginning of the Son: that the Son is from nothing, the terms “begotten,” “created,” “defined,” and “established” are all synonyms, and there was a time that the Son was not. Arius falsely claimed that:

Before he was begotten, or created, or defined, or established, he did not exist. For he was not unbegotten. But we are persecuted because we have said the Son has a beginning but God has no beginning. We are persecuted because of that and for saying he came from non-being. But we said this since he is not a portion of God nor of anything in existence. That is why we are persecuted; you know the rest.¹⁰

In 320 AD, Arius wrote to Bishop Alexander, repeating his faith, and further stating that the Son is a “perfect creature” of God who is not co-eternal with the Father. Although he is a glorious creature that God uses as an instrument in creation and salvation, he is changeable and subordinate to the Father.¹¹ Arius falsely argued that:

[The Father] begot [the Son] not in appearance, but in reality; and that he made him subsist at his own will, unalterable and unchangeable, the perfect creature of God, but not as one of the creatures; offspring, but not as one of the other things begotten..

[B]ut, as we say, [the Son] was created at the will of God, before time and before the ages, and came to life and being from the Father, and the glories which coexist in him are from the Father.

[B]ut the Son, begotten apart from time by the Father, and created and founded before the ages, was not in existence before his

⁸ González, Justo L. *Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. Vol. 1, HarperCollins, 2010, 184.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ Arius. *Letter of Arius to Eusebius of Nicomedia*.

¹¹ Walker, Williston, et al. *A History of the Christian Church*. 4th ed., Scribner, 1985, 133.

generation, but was begotten apart from time before all things, and he alone came into existence from the Father. For he is neither eternal nor co-eternal nor co-unbegotten with the Father, nor does he have his being together with the Father, as some speak of relations, introducing two unbegotten beginnings. But God is before all things as monad and beginning of all. Therefore he is also before the Son, as we have learned also from your public preaching in the church.¹²

News of the uproar and chaos raging between Alexander and Arius made its way to Emperor Constantine in 324. He did not fully understand the theological significance of the controversy, but recognized the threat of disunity that it presented to his empire, which was united by the bedrock of the one Christian doctrine. Fearing division, he sent Bishop Hosius¹³ of Cordoba¹⁴ with a letter that called for reconciliation between Alexander and Arius in an effort to save his empire. When no reconciliation could be reached, Constantine convened the First Ecumenical Council in 325 AD, which was held in Nicaea, and in which Alexander and the Council deposed Arius.

Arius was deposed by the Council, but that wasn't enough for the 318 bishops gathered at Nicaea. Recognizing the danger of Arius' teachings, they set to work on a formula to express the Orthodox faith as well as condemn Arius' heretical teaching outright. Constantine suggested that the word *homoousios* be included in the creed, perhaps at the advice of Bishop Hosius.¹⁵ The Latin term was *consubstantialis*. The literal translation would have been *sunupostaton*, but this would have been open to a Sabellian interpretation in the Greek.¹⁶ Therefore, the more accurate translation from Latin was *homoousios*.¹⁷

Bishop Eusebius of Caesarea, a famous historian and secret supporter of Arius, did not like this word, arguing that it was a "vague and nontechnical term which was capable of a fairly wide range of senses."¹⁸ The term was frowned upon given that "it was an unscriptural term and because it seemed vulnerable to a 'Sabellian,' or modalist, interpretation."¹⁹ However, he likely protested the term because it left no room for an Arian interpretation, as the term was intended only to say that the Son bears no likeness to generated creatures, but is likened in every respect solely to the Father Who begat Him, and that He is not from some other reality and substance,

¹² Arius. *Confession of Faith from Arius and his followers to Bishop Alexander of Alexandria*.

¹³ An alternative spelling is Ossius.

¹⁴ This is Sapin. Cordova is also an alternative spelling.

¹⁵ See González, Justo L. *Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*. Vol. 1, HarperCollins, 2010, 189 and L'Huillier, Archbishop Peter. *The Church of the Ancient Councils: the Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996, 101.

¹⁶ Archbishop Peter explains that the Latin has no such connotation.

¹⁷ L'Huillier, Archbishop Peter. *The Church of the Ancient Councils: the Disciplinary Work of the First Four Ecumenical Councils*. St Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1996, 101.

¹⁸ Walker, Williston, et al. *A History of the Christian Church*. 4th ed., Scribner, 1985, 135.

¹⁹ Athanasius, and Khaled Anatolios. *Athanasius* (The Early Church Fathers). First Edition. Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, 2004, 11.

but from the Father.²⁰ The bishops assembled at Nicaea agreed on what would be regarded as the Nicene Creed, with anathemas²¹ that “achieved the aim of excluding Arianism.”²²

Defending the Nicene Faith

The Arian threat did not cease after Nicaea, but promulgated with attacks against the Nicene fathers for almost 100 years. In 325, leaders of the Arian party were exiled after attempting to reconcile Arius, but were restored by Constantine due to the influence of Eusebius of Nicomedia.²³

The efforts to recognize Nicaea continued throughout the life of St. Athanasius the Apostolic and was even examined in the Second Ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381, in which 150 bishops met to, among other issues, recognize the Nicene Creed as the true expression of faith. Most of the conflict following Nicaea, however, was in the expression *homoousios* and its relationship to “*hypostasis*”²⁴ since, until that time, these terms were ambiguous, their definitions fluctuated, and they could possibly refer to the same thing:

Ousia could mean the particular subsistence of a thing as well as the common substance of which several individual beings share. The same ambiguity existed in the term *hypostasis*...Both *ousia* and *hypostasis* could be translated into Latin as *substantia*.²⁵

In other words, one bishop could speak of three *hypostases*, referring to three Persons of the Holy Trinity, while another bishop could understand this to mean three *ousia* or three gods. There was a need to distinguish the two expressions.

In 362, Athanasius convened a synod in Alexandria recognizing that God is one substance—*homoousios*—while simultaneously recognizing that three *hypostases* did not mean three separate Gods or three alien substances.²⁶ He also recognized that *homoousios* recognized the oneness of God while sustaining the distinction among Father, Logos, and Spirit. This

²⁰ Walker, Williston, et al. *A History of the Christian Church*. 4th ed., Scribner, 1985, 135.

²¹ *Anathema* is a Greek word meaning “curse” or “cutting off.” In early usage, the anathema was an offering that was placed on high and suspended for all to see. It was rooted in sacrifice. Later, when reprehensible things came to be displayed to all, such as public execution of criminals i.e. crucifixion, it came to mean something abhorrent in the sight of the people. Eventually, in the early Church, it came to refer to the exclusion of one who is unrepentant. According to St. Paul in his epistle to the Galatians, “But even if we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed (*anathema*)” (Ga. 1:8). To be *anathema* or *anathematized* means to be excommunicated from the Church. However, one who is *anathematized* may repent and return to the true faith.

²² Walker, Williston, et al. *A History of the Christian Church*. 4th ed., Scribner, 1985, 135.

²³ Constantine had a vacation home in Nicomedia, where he would often be visited by his distant relative, Eusebius of Nicomedia, who finally convinced him that the Arians had renounced their heresies and may be reconciled with the church and empire.

²⁴ Defined later, it refers to the individual subsistence of a thing. It refers to person, and, in the context of the Holy Trinity, identifies the individual persons of the Trinity, i.e. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

²⁵ Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought. Volume I, from the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*. 2nd ed., Abingdon Press, 1987, 258-259.

²⁶ Walker, Williston, et al. *A History of the Christian Church*. 4th ed., Scribner, 1985, 141.

council recognized that the Holy Spirit is a being of the same essence, and that it is enough to hold on to the faith confessed at Nicaea.²⁷

The Alexandrine Council of 362 highlighted the confusion between the terms *ousia* and *hypostasis*. Depending on the context, the word took a different meaning. On the one hand, if one was referring to the Godhead, there was but one *hypostasis*, while, on the other hand, if one was speaking about the distinction of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, there were three *hypostases*. Although Athanasius reconciled these two positions with the Nicene formula, it was not until the Cappadocian fathers that a distinction between *ousia* and *hypostasis* was formulated.

Meanwhile, the Cappadocians distinguished between *ousia* and *hypostasis*. Whereas these terms were used synonymously in the past, the Cappadocians reserved *hypostasis* for “refer[ring] to the individual subsistence of a thing,” while *ousia* referred to the “essence that is common to the various members of a species.”²⁸ Therefore they produced the formula that God is three *hypostases* and one *ousia*, “three individual subsistences that participate in one divine essence.”²⁹

Apollinarianism: An Extreme Response to Arianism

Back in Alexandria, as Athanasius had united the Nicenes to defend the Son, Apollinarius took a highly flawed approach against the Arians that resulted in its own heresy. Apollinarius, born in 310, was the son of an Alexandrian priest, and studied at Athens with Julian.³⁰ After the Apostate banned Christian schoolmasters from teaching literature, Apollinarius and his father attempted to rewrite Scripture in classical forms.³¹ Apollinarius became bishop of Laodicea in 362 and broke off from the orthodox Church in 375.

Despite his support for the Nicene faith, his highly logical approach to the Arian problem led to another Christological issue. Apollinarius attempted to contrive a refutation against the argument made by later Arians, that “if the Word was joined to a human body, and such a body is by nature mutable, then the Word itself must be mutable.”³² His task, then, was to reconcile how the immutable Word could unite with the mutable humanity.³³

To counter the Arians, Apollinarius denied the full humanity of Christ, stating that the Logos assumed a body without a mind. Using a trichotomist approach that man is body, soul, and spirit,³⁴ he applied a neo-Platonist approach to distinguish between the soul and spirit. He stated that Christ, too, being man, would have a body, soul, and spirit.³⁵ Whereas the soul was

²⁷ Walker, Williston, et al. *A History of the Christian Church*. 4th ed., Scribner, 1985, 142.

²⁸ González, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought, Revised Edition, Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*. Abingdon Press, 1987, 287

²⁹ *Ibid.*

³⁰ Davis, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. Liturgical Press, 2017, 103.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² González, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought, Revised Edition, Vol. 1: From the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*. Abingdon Press, 1987, 346.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ He used 1 Th. 5:23, which refers to these three: “. . .and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved . . .”

³⁵ Apollinarius of Laodicea. *Fragments*.

impersonal and not conscious, merely the life force of man, the spirit itself is the reason and personality. Therefore Apollinarius declared that “Christ, having God as His spirit—that is, His intellect—together with soul and body, is rightly called ‘the human being from heaven.’”³⁶ Apollinarius denied the presence of the complete triad of human qualities in the Incarnate Logos. He asserted that Christ did not assume a human “intellect,” but that this was replaced by the Logos, which was united with an animate body. The Logos became flesh, but he did not become man. Apollinarius held that the human body of Christ “coexisted” and indivisibly “grew together with” the Logos, who became the principle of action in it, and thus took on a new manner of existence “in the unity of a complex incarnate Divine nature.”

He mutilated Christ by stating that the divinity replaced the spirit in Christ, so that he did not take a human mind. He taught that “the divine energy fulfills the role of animating the spirit and of the human mind,” which had major soteriological implications, as Gregory of Nazianzus explained:

If anyone has put his trust in Him as a Man without a human mind, he is really bereft of mind, and quite unworthy of salvation. For that which He has not assumed He has not healed; but that which is united to His Godhead is also saved. If only half Adam fell, then that which Christ assumes and saves may be half also; but if the whole of his nature fell, it must be united to the whole nature of Him that was begotten, and so be saved as a whole. Let them not, then, begrudge us our complete salvation, or clothe the Saviour only with bones and nerves and the portraiture of humanity. For if His Manhood is without soul, even the Arians admit this, that they may attribute His Passion to the Godhead, as that which gives motion to the body is also that which suffers. But if He has a soul, and yet is without a mind, how is He man, for man is not a mindless animal? And this would necessarily involve that while His form and tabernacle was human, His soul should be that of a horse or an ox, or some other of the brute creation. This, then, would be what He saves; and I have been deceived by the Truth, and led to boast of an honor which had been bestowed upon another. But if His Manhood is intellectual and not without mind, let them cease to be thus really mindless.

But, says such an one, the Godhead took the place of the human intellect. How does this touch me? For Godhead joined to flesh alone is not man, nor to soul alone, nor to both apart from intellect, which is the most essential part of man. Keep then the whole man, and mingle Godhead therewith, that you may benefit me in my completeness. But, he asserts, He could not contain Two perfect Natures. Not if you only look at Him in a bodily fashion. For a bushel measure will not hold two bushels, nor will the space of one body hold two or more bodies. But if you will look at what is

³⁶ *Ibid.*

mental and incorporeal, remember that I in my one personality can contain soul and reason and mind and the Holy Spirit; and before me this world, by which I mean the system of things visible and invisible, contained Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. For such is the nature of intellectual Existences, that they can mingle with one another and with bodies, incorporeally and invisibly. For many sounds are comprehended by one ear; and the eyes of many are occupied by the same visible objects, and the smell by odors; nor are the senses narrowed by each other, or crowded out, nor the objects of sense diminished by the multitude of the perceptions.³⁷

Between 377 and 381, Apollinarianism was officially condemned three times, and was unofficially condemned by Gregory of Nazianzus and Gregory of Nyssa.³⁸ It was first condemned in 377 by a council in Rome under Pope Damasus. It was condemned a second time in Antioch in 379, and a third at Constantinople in 381.

Alexandrian and Antiochene Christology

A dispute arose between the Alexandrian and Antiochene approach to Christology as a result of Apollinarianism, which would eventually lead to the Nestorian heresy and Third Ecumenical Council at Ephesus.

Two factors caused the Alexandrians to be associated with Apollinarius:

The first factor was the fact his father was born in Alexandria, and that Apollinarius had a very healthy, vibrant relationship with St. Athanasius, the twentieth Patriarch of Alexandria. Up until the time of his heresy, St. Athanasius depended on Apollinarius as a staunch defender of the Nicene faith. As discussed above, Apollinarius' approach to Arianism, especially regarding the soul of Christ, caused him to take an extreme position that became its own heresy.

The second factor was that since Apollinarius was Athanasius' ally against the Arians, Apollinarianism used many phrases and expressions used in the proper context within Alexandrian Christology. Alexandrians and Apollinarians both used phrases such as "one nature" or *physis*, and "one hypostasis." Many of Apollinarius' writings began to circulate with the names of others, such as St. Athanasius, fraudulently and falsely attributed to them. This led to the Antiochenes to believe that the Alexandrians were Apollinarian since it could be possible to mistake a treatise of Apollinarius for that of Athanasius.

The Alexandrine position was labeled "Word-Flesh" Christology since "the Word became flesh" (cf. Jn. 1:14), uniting the human and divine nature in the one person of Christ. This concept is regarded as the *hypostatic union*, which will be explained in depth below. Despite what the Antiochenes thought, the Alexandrians rejected him and did not consider Apollinarius among their fathers. His teachings were condemned outright, and any similarity in language or

³⁷ Gregory of Nazianzus. *Critique of Apollinarius and Apollinarianism*, Epistle 101.

³⁸ Gonzalez, Justo L. *A History of Christian Thought. Volume I, from the Beginnings to the Council of Chalcedon*. 2nd ed., Abingdon Press, 1987, 351-52.

expression was a consequence of a common vocabulary. No matter the words, the ideas were completely different.

On the other hand, the Antiochenes, whose teachings are influenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia, maintained a “Word-man” Christology. Theodore asserted that Christ had two distinct natures: human and divine. Answering the Arians, Theodore asserted that the Son was true God of true God, consubstantial with the Father. In the face of Apollinarianism, Theodore asserted that the “Man assumed” was a complete man, perfect in everything which belongs to human nature and composed of a mortal body and a rational soul.³⁹ However, Theodore’s problem was the union of the human and divine natures. Theodore was so concerned with distinguishing the humanity from the divinity that he failed to describe how these can be united in Christ. He could not properly articulate how the Word became flesh. Although Theodore did not like the characterization of his Christology that there were “two sons,” he nevertheless maintained “two subjects” since he was unwilling to unite the humanity and the divinity in one person.

Influenced by Theodore of Mopsuestia, the Antiochenes maintained that the man Jesus, who had a human mind and soul, was united with the Word of God, the divine Logos. This union allows for Jesus the man to then become the Savior and King. The Antiochene approach to Christology describes a partnership between the divine Logos and man Jesus, who collaborated to save humanity. Thus the great shortcoming of the Antiochenes and the real problem between Cyril and Nestorius centered on the unity of Christ.

The Nestorian Heresy

As mentioned above, the teaching of Theodore of Mopsuestia proved problematic since he essentially posited two persons, Jesus a human and the Word of God, who partnered together to save humanity. For this reason, Nestorius took issue with the term Theotokos since the implication that Virgin Mary bore God contradicted his understanding that a human Jesus united with the Word of God. Nestorius maintained that a more accurate title for Virgin Mary was Christotokos instead of Theotokos since she bore a man who was partnered with the Word.

St. Cyril addressed this heresy in his second letter addressed to Nestorius:

We, therefore, confess one Christ and Lord, not as worshipping a man with the Word (lest this expression “with the Word” should suggest to the mind the idea of division), but worshipping him as one and the same, forasmuch as the body of the Word, with which he sits with the Father, is not separated from the Word himself, not as if two sons were sitting with him, but one by the union with the flesh. If, however, we reject the personal union as impossible or unbecoming, we fall into the error of speaking of two sons, for it will be necessary to distinguish, and to say, that he who was properly man was honored with the appellation of Son, and that he

³⁹ Young, Frances M., and Andrew Teal. *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and Its Background*. 2nd ed., Baker Academic, 2010, 269.

who is properly the Word of God, has by nature both the name and the reality of Sonship.⁴⁰

What we understand about Nestorius comes from Cyril, which is clearly seen in his *Twelve Anathemas to Nestorius*. In the Fourth Anathema, Cyril summarized and condemned Nestorius' position:

If anyone take the terms used in the Gospels and apostolic writings, whether referred to Christ by the saints, or applied to Himself by Himself, and allocates them to two persons or hypostates, attributing some to a man conceived of as separate from the Word of God and some, as more appropriate to God, only to the Word of God the Father, let him be anathema.⁴¹

During the Council of Ephesus while under house arrest, St. Cyril of Alexandria drafted an explanation of his *Twelve Anathemas* in order to win the favor of the eastern bishops. In doing so, he further elaborated on his understanding of Nestorius' heresy and why the Alexandrian approach accurately reflected the true Apostolic teaching:

Although the Word of God is in the form of God the Father and equal to Him, He “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,” as Scripture says (Php 2:6). On the contrary, He lowered Himself to a voluntary self-emptying and willingly condescended to enter into our condition, not abandoning what He is, but remaining God even in this state while not disdaining the limitations of the human condition. Therefore, everything relating to His divinity and everything relating to His humanity all belong to Him. Why did He empty Himself if He was ashamed of the limitations of human nature? And if He disdained what was human, who compelled Him by necessity and force to become like us?

All the sayings in the Gospels, both those with a human coloring and indeed those appropriate to God, we therefore assign to a single person, because we believe that Christ Jesus, that is, the Word of God incarnate and made man, is a single Son. Consequently, if He should say something consonant with the human condition, we take these human utterances to have been accommodated to the limitations of His humanity (for, after all, the human utterance is His also). And if He should speak as God, we likewise allocate the sayings that transcend human nature to the one Christ and Son, since we believe that He who became man was God. Those who divide Him into two persons inevitably conceive of Him as two sons. A human being like ourselves cannot properly

⁴⁰ Cyril of Alexandria. *Second Letter to Nestorius*.

⁴¹ Cyril of Alexandria and Norman Russell. *Cyril of Alexandria*. Routledge, 2004, 181.

be divided into two persons, even though he is regarded as consisting of a soul and a body, but in a single human being with a single identity. The same is also true with regard to Emmanuel. Since the incarnate Word of God made man is a single Son and Lord, His person is also necessarily single, and we allocate to it both the human characteristics on account of the dispensation of the Incarnation and the divine on account of His ineffable generation from God the Father. Those who divide Him and set apart a distinct human being, who is a different Son from the Word of God, and a distinct God, who is another Son, saying that there are two sons, rightly incur the consequences of this anathema.⁴²

At the close of the Third Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, St. Cyril of Alexandria victoriously proclaimed the hypostatic union of Christ as the unity of the divinity and humanity of Christ in one person. The unity of humanity and divinity in Christ was without confusion, change, or alteration. As St. Cyril wrote:

As I said earlier, when the Word of God, who in nature and truth shone forth from God the Father, had assumed flesh and blood, He remained the same, that is truly and naturally the Son of the Father. He is the one and only Son, not one son alongside another son, considered in this way to be one person. In this way we can gather into a true unity, though one that transcends speech and understanding, realities which were unlike one another, and separated because of their respective natures. This is how we can make progress along the infallible path of faith. For we say that the one and the same Jesus Christ is from God the Father as God the Word, and also of the line of godly David according to the flesh.⁴³

The Hypostatic Union

St. Cyril of Alexandria applied the term *hypostasis* to denote the manner of the Christological union: it was an *hypostatic union*.⁴⁴ According to Fr. John McGuckin, St. Cyril had to account for the integrity of the divinity and the humanity while demonstrating their integral communion and the results of it. He settled on the key term of “Union.” From divinity and humanity a union has taken place; not an overlap, or a cohabitation, or a relationship, or a displacement, or an association. None of these things his opponents proposed.⁴⁵ He argued for a union in the strict sense of the word, yet a union that was of the type that did not destroy its constituent elements. It was thus in the manner of the soul-body union in humans, a union that affected new conditions and capacities for both constituents while preserving their basic

⁴² *Id.* at 182.

⁴³ Cyril of Alexandria and John Anthony McGuckin. *On the Unity of Christ*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995, 83-84.

⁴⁴ Ishak, Fr. Shenouda M. *Christology and the Council of Chalcedon*. Outskirts Press, 2013, 203.

⁴⁵ Cyril of Alexandria and John Anthony McGuckin. *On the Unity of Christ*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995, 40.

elements intact, and not, for example, in the manner of a union of sand and sugar or fire and straw.⁴⁶

In his *Second Letter to Nestorius*, St. Cyril proposed the doctrine of hypostatic union to summarize his central objections to Nestorius' position:

[B]ut since, for us and for our salvation, he personally united to himself an human body, and came forth of a woman, he is in this way said to be born after the flesh; for he was not first born a common man of the holy Virgin, and then the Word came down and entered into him, but the union being made in the womb itself, he is said to endure a birth after the flesh, ascribing to himself the birth of his own flesh.⁴⁷

St. Cyril explained above that the Lord did not change nature when He was incarnated and became man. Although He became man, He continued to be God. The true union St. Cyril describes is that between Christ and humanity, which, while a mystery beyond comprehension, is a reality that cannot be denied, as he wrote:

This is why we must understand our Lord Jesus Christ in one person. As the Word, He is born divinely before all ages and times, but in these last times of this age the same One was born of a woman according to the flesh. To the same one we attribute both the divine and human characteristics, and we also say that to the same one belongs the birth and the sufferings on the cross since He appropriated everything that belonged to His own flesh, while ever remaining impassible in the nature of the Godhead.⁴⁸

When speaking in regards to the incarnation, St. Cyril denies that the Lord ceased to be God, but rather asserts that the human nature and the divine nature were united in the one person of Jesus Christ without mingling, confusion, alteration, or absorption:

We do not believe in One who was honored with Godhead by grace, lest we be called worshippers of man. Rather, the Lord Jesus Christ who appeared in the form of a servant, who was truly man like us and shared in our nature, was truly God, and remained God, since He was the Word. Having taken flesh, He did not lay down what was His, but rather united the divinity and the humanity in His person.⁴⁹

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ Cyril of Alexandria. *Second Letter to Nestorius*.

⁴⁸ Cyril of Alexandria and John Anthony McGuckin. *On the Unity of Christ*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995, 133.

⁴⁹ Cyril of Alexandria. *Scholia on the Incarnation*, §12.

Answering the challenge that “emptying one’s self” would mean that any part of His nature would be lost and that He would cease being God, St. Cyril wrote:

God the Word was full by nature and in every way perfect. He distributed *out of His own Fullness* goodness to humanity, which is described as *emptying*. It’s not that His Proper Nature was wronged or changed as to become something else. It wasn’t made inferior. The Word of God is inconvertible and unchangeable, just like the Father. When Christ was made flesh, He made the poverty of human nature His own. First, in that He was once made while being God. Next, Christ, who is by nature free, took the form of a servant. He receives glory, yet He is the Lord of glory. He is resurrected, yet He is life. He receives power over all and is the King of all, yet was obedient to the Father and suffered on the Cross to rescue humanity. These things befit the measure of the human nature, yet He makes them His own with flesh and fulfills the economy, remaining what He was.⁵⁰

St. Cyril presented to the Church the reality of the nature of Christ as one composite nature called *mia physis* in Greek. As illustrated above, this means that in the one incarnate nature of Christ we find humanity and divinity united, without either one being absorbed, subsumed, transformed, altered, or lost in any way. However, confusion about Cyril’s formula as well as the desire for preeminence would cause the Church to suffer a catastrophic schism lasting to the present day.

To summarize the Alexandrian position according to St. Cyril of Alexandria, (1) the union of Christ was “of or from two natures,” making it clear that the manhood came into being only in the union with God the Son, and that in the union it did not undergo any change or reduction; (2) the union was hypostatic and natural, emphasizing that the union was inward and real; (3) because the union was hypostatic and natural, Christ was one hypostasis and incarnate nature of God the Word; and (4) Christ was at once perfect God and perfect man.⁵¹ Whereas the Alexandrians believed that the Son was not to be spoken of as “two natures after the union,” the Antiochenes maintained that Christ was “two natures after the union.” While the Antiochenes did affirm some sort of unity of the natures, they did not accept the Alexandrian view.

Formulary of Reunion, 433

Even after the Council of Ephesus, the persistent animosity and disagreement between Alexandria and Antioch led St. Cyril of Alexandria to draft a letter to John of Antioch, which is numbered *Letter 39*. This letter, called the *Formulary of Reunion* (or other “Formulary” or “Reunion”) of 433, was Cyril’s attempt at uniting Alexandria and Antioch. The letter was very difficult for the Antiochenes since it required them to accept the hypostatic union and condemn Nestorius. Although Antiochenes may have thought “hypostatic union” was a synonym for “prosopic union,” which was an expression more agreeable to the Antiochenes, many, such as

⁵⁰ *Id.* at §5.

⁵¹ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 40.

Theodoret of Cyrus, refused to condemn Nestorius. Even though Theodoret eventually accepted the *Formulary*, save for rejecting Nestorius, the Antiochenes believed that “hypostatic union” was actually a return to Apollinarianism. This tension would come to a head during the trial of Eutyches in 448 and would be the basis by which the Antiochenes could overcome the Alexandrians at Chalcedon.

When Theodoret of Cyrus decided to finally accept the *Formulary*, he insisted upon two approaches that would further polarize the Alexandrian and Antiochene positions.

Firstly, he found a way to give the *Formulary* an Antiochene understanding. Having made *hypostatic union* equivalent to *prosopic union*, Theodoret was able to demonstrate that there were two natures after the union since the Greek word *prosopon*, while a synonym for person like *hypostasis*, “signifies more the external aspect of a being which distinguishes one individual from another than person in the full sense of the term.”⁵² To further hammer home his point, Theodoret recruited men holding influential positions to teach the Antiochene interpretation of the *Formulary*.

Secondly, building upon the foundation of an Antiochene Cyril with an Antiochene *Formulary*, Theodoret admitted the Second Letter to Nestorius and the *Formulary* as documents of the faith, even though the Second Letter to Nestorius spoke against the *prosopic union* since that was the basis for Nestorian Christology and Mariology.

Difference between Hypostasis and Prosopon

According to Fr. Tadros Y. Malaty, some Antiochian leaders treated the “*hypostatic*” union of St. Cyril with suspicion, as if it were Apollinarian. They adopted their theory to assert Christ’s manhood and to confirm Him as a real and perfect man. However, they say that there are two natures after the union, and then their thought developed to speak about two persons and not only two natures in Jesus Christ.⁵³

So why would the Antiochenes prefer the expression *prosopic union* or insist that *prosopon* and *hypostasis* are synonyms? According to Fr. V.C. Samuel, the Antiochenes, affirming that Christ was a man indwelt by God the Son, preferred *prosopic union* since it expressed the relationship that existed originally between God and man. However, the relationship between God and man changed after sin. In fact, through the incarnation, the relationship between God and man became more personal. *Hypostatic union* expresses the reality of God’s grace towards man insofar that God the Word united Himself *hypostatically* to humanity. Jesus Christ therefore continues eternally as the Godman.⁵⁴

⁵² Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, footnote 49, pp. 409.

⁵³ Malaty, Fr. Tadros Y. *A Panoramic View of Patristics in the First Six Centuries with an Overview of Selected Coptic Orthodox Fathers and Authors of the Middle Ages*. St. George’s Coptic Orthodox Church, Sporting, Alexandria, Egypt, 2006, 71.

⁵⁴ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 316.

Chapter 2: Councils regarding Archimandrite Eutyches

Introduction

Although St. Cyril of Alexandria deposed Nestorius, defended the title *Theotokos* and articulated the hypostatic union, debates continued in the Orthodox church regarding the nature and person of Christ. The issue was always how to recognize that Christ became man and yet did not change Who he was, being God. This boiled down into whether Christ is “*in two natures*” or “*of two natures.*”

The inciting act that would eventually lead to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 was a debate between an ambitious bishop and an elderly monk. This cannot be described as an eloquent theological debate. Two smaller councils would pave the road to Chalcedon.

Accusations against Eutyches

On November 8, 448, Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum brought accusations to Bishop Flavian of Constantinople against Eutyches, an archimandrite of a monastery in Constantinople. Eusebius accused Eutyches of teaching heresies contrary to the Orthodox doctrine defined at the Ecumenical Councils in Nicaea and Ephesus. The indictment of Eusebius against Eutyches read:

[Eutyches, presbyter and archimandrite], does not cease with unbridled mouth and uncurbed tongue to deny the pious doctrines of orthodoxy and to defame both the holy fathers and myself, although I have never been suspected of heresy, have always made war on the heretics, have championed the orthodox faith to the best of my power, and have abided by the creed of the 318 holy fathers who convened at Nicaea, all the proceedings of the great and holy council in the metropolis of Ephesus, and the beliefs and definitions of the blessed Cyril then bishop of the great city of Alexandria, Athanasius, Gregory the Great, Gregory and Gregory, and Atticus and Proclus the holy bishops.

I therefore beg and beseech your sacredness not to ignore my petition, but to order Eutyches, presbyter and archimandrite, to appear before your holy synod and answer the charges I bring against him. I am ready to prove that his being called orthodox is a sham and that he has no part in the orthodox faith. I adjure you by the holy and consubstantial Trinity that preserves our Christ-loving emperors and by the prosperity and long reign of our most pious emperors Theodosius and Valentinian, perpetual Augusti, to order the aforesaid Eutyches to appear before your holy synod and answer the charges I bring against him, so that, when I have proved him guilty, those he has corrupted may be set right and the orthodox faith may be seen to be victorious now as well, the faith

which embraces all the ends of the world. If I obtain this, I shall give thanks to your holy synod for ever.⁵⁵

Bishop Flavian, astonished at this accusation, requested that Eusebius speak to Eutyches. When Bishop Eusebius refused, Presbyter John and Deacon Andrew were sent to interview Eutyches. A local synod was called to question Eutyches, which met on November 12, 448.

The Home Synod of 448

The first session of the Home Synod, held at Constantinople on November 12, 448, established the Councils of Nicaea and Ephesus as the standards for the faith. The synod of 32 bishops utilized these to assess whether Eutyches' faith was orthodox.

On November 15, 448, presbyter John and deacon Andrew reported that Eutyches had accepted the faith of Nicaea as interpreted by the council of Ephesus. Additionally, the report presented two accusations against Eutyches, namely that he rejected a union of two natures and that he refused to admit that Christ was consubstantial with us.⁵⁶ These two accusations served as the fundamental point of contention for the remainder of the synod.

Regarding the first accusation, Eutyches had always maintained unity of the two natures. Eutychus hesitated regarding whether Jesus was consubstantial with us. Although he admitted that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary and was true God and True man, Eutyches added that His body was consubstantial with us.⁵⁷ The confusion demonstrated here was Eutyches' unfamiliarity with the use of consubstantial here. While he recognized that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, he never considered using this expression to express that the Son was consubstantial with us.

On November 20, 448, the synod met once more to put Eutyches on trial. The Formulary Reunion, which the Antiochenes believed was an article of faith according to the teachings of Theodore of Cyrus, was read aloud:

We confess, therefore, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Only Begotten Son of God, to be perfect God and perfect Man, of a reasonable soul and flesh; begotten before the ages of the Father according to the Godhead, and in the last days, for us and for our salvation, born of Mary the Virgin according to His humanity, of the same substance [consubstantial] with His Father according to His Divinity, and of the same substance [consubstantial] with us according to His humanity; for there became a union of two natures. Wherefore we confess one Christ, one Son, one Lord. According to this understanding of this unconfused union, we

⁵⁵ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 170-71.

⁵⁶ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 47.

⁵⁷ Hefele, Charles. *A History of the Councils of the Church, from the Original Documents*. Vol. 3, AMS Press, 1972, 162.

confess the holy Virgin to be Mother of God; because God the Word was incarnate and became Man, and from this conception He united the temple taken from her with Himself.⁵⁸

Bishop Flavian pressed Eutyches to answer whether he confessed two natures after the incarnation, and whether Christ is consubstantial with us according to the flesh. Eutyches refused to answer, but instead offered a document containing his confession. While the synod ignored Eutyches' request to have the letter read aloud, Flavian asked Eutyches to read it himself. Eutyches refused, which caused Bishop Flavian to question whether this was Eutyches' own document. He answered to the bishop that the document was his own confession, and that it contained the Nicene Creed. Since the document was never read,⁵⁹ Eutyches made an oral confession:

Thus, I believe: I worship the Father with the Son, and the Son with the Father, and the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. Concerning His coming in the flesh, I confess that it happened from the flesh of the Virgin, and that He became man perfectly for our salvation. Thus, I confess in the presence of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and of your holiness.⁶⁰

Notwithstanding this confession, the synod continued to ask Eutyches to clarify whether he accepted that the Son is consubstantial with us. The bishops continued to reason with Eutyches, eventually arguing that if Virgin Mary is consubstantial with us, then Jesus, being the Son of Man, must be consubstantial with us. Eutyches hesitated still. Fr. V.C. Samuel, summarizing Eutyches' dilemma, wrote:

[Eutyches] did not question whether Christ was consubstantial with us because he denied the reality and perfection of Christ's manhood, nor because he refused to admit His real birth from Mary, but because Christ for him was God incarnate. The manhood which God the Son assumed in the incarnation was not the manhood of a man, but of God the Son who accepted to Himself an incarnate state. In other words, Eutyches was trying in his own way to exclude a doctrine of two Sons, which he feared was implicit in the phrase.⁶¹

Florentius demanded that Eutyches affirm "two natures" after the union and that the Son was "consubstantial with us." Moreover, the synod demanded that Eutyches anathematize all who hold contrary views. Eutyches responded:

I have read in the blessed Cyril, in the holy fathers and in Saint Athanasius that they said "from two natures" before the union, but

⁵⁸ Cyril of Alexandria, *Letter 39 to John of Antioch*.

⁵⁹ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 49.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

⁶¹ *Id.* at 51.

after the union and the incarnation they no longer affirmed two natures but one.⁶²

Florentius pressed the question again: “Do you acknowledge two natures after the union? Speak! If you do not, you will be deposed,”⁶³ to which Eutyches responded, “Have the writings of St. Athanasius read. Then you will discover that he says nothing of the kind.”⁶⁴ Bishop Basil said, “If you do not affirm two natures after the incarnation, you imply mixture and confusion,”⁶⁵ followed by Florentius who said: “He who does not say ‘from two natures’ and ‘two natures’ is not orthodox in his beliefs.”⁶⁶ Bishop Flavian finally ruled:

Eutyches, formerly presbyter and archimandrite, is revealed in every way, by both his past actions and his present testimony, to be riddled with the heresies of Valentinus and Apollinarius and to be incorrigible in following their blasphemies. Scorning our exhortation and teaching, he has refused to assent to the orthodox doctrines. For this reason, as we moan and weep for his total perdition, we have decreed in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has blasphemed, that he is deprived of all sacerdotal rank, of communion with us, and of the headship of a monastery. All persons who in future speak with him or visit him are informed that they too will incur the penalty of excommunication for failing to avoid his company.⁶⁷

Aftermath of the Home Synod of 448

Ultimately, the synod that condemned Eutyches leaned heavily towards Antiochene Christology. The Nicene Creed was not read. The synod only read the Second Letter to Nestorius and St. Cyril’s letter to John of Antioch. The Council of Constantinople in 381 was not referenced at all. Even though Nicaea and Ephesus were cited throughout the proceedings against Eutyches and were even declared to be the standard of faith, the synod only accepted the Antiochene view, which the Alexandrians opposed.

Eutyches Appeals his Condemnation

Even prior to the synod reaching its final decision, Eutyches appealed to Rome, Alexandria, Jerusalem, and Thessalonica. On March 30, 449, Emperor Theodosius II summoned St. Dioscorus, the 25th Bishop of Alexandria and successor of St. Cyril of Alexandria, to hold a council on August 1, 449, in Ephesus.

⁶² Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 259.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ *Id.* at 264-65.

Meanwhile, Pope Leo of Rome decided to approach the Christological issue in an entirely different way. Instead of working towards reconciliation, Leo wanted to offer his own theological statement for the east to accept, irrespective of its past tradition.⁶⁸ This theological statement was articulated in a letter named the *Tome* or the *Tome of Leo*. This letter was first written to Bishop Flavian, but was sent and circulated to many bishops, but never to St. Dioscorus. Leo sent the *Tome* to Constantinople on June 13, 449. Upon receipt of the Emperor's invitation for a council in Ephesus, Leo wrote back saying this was not necessary since the issue, in his opinion, was exceedingly clear. Bishop Flavian greatly desired that Leo join the council, but he couldn't. Pope Leo provided Flavian with his *Tome*⁶⁹ and sent three delegates to attend the council in his place. Only two of the three made it to Ephesus.

Second Council of Ephesus, 449

On August 8, 449, the second Council of Ephesus was convened, which was to be Eutyches' appellate hearing. St. Dioscorus presided over the bishops in attendance. He began by affirming the true faith as outlined in the Nicene Creed and confirmed in Ephesus, and then allowed Eutyches to be brought before the council.

Eutyches began his address to the council by commending himself "to the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit."⁷⁰ He appealed that he had fought alongside those judging him now at the Council of Ephesus in 431 against Nestorius, and that the fathers present had witnessed his faith. Eutyches requested that the Council read his confession, a request that Bishop Flavian ignored during the Home Synod. The letter in its state at Ephesus 449 had been updated since it reflected and commented on the events of the Home Synod 448. After Bishop Stephen of Ephesus endorsed his request, Presbyter John the notary read Eutyches' confession.

Eutyches began his confession by stating that, from his youth, he desired to "live a quiet and carefree life till old age and stay away from all turmoil,"⁷¹ but the Home Synod would not allow that. He declared that he refused to hold an opinion contrary to that of Nicaea and Ephesus, and then proceeded to cite the entire Nicene Creed, including its anathema against Arius. By this Creed, said Eutyches, he was baptized, lived, and hoped to die. He mentioned that St. Cyril of Alexandria victoriously defended the faith contained in the Creed at Ephesus and gave Eutyches a written copy of the decree, which he kept. Eutyches anathematized Mani, Valentinus, Apollinarius, and Nestorius and all heretics since Simon Magus.

His confession continued that he was falsely accused by Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum so that he could stand before trial and stumble in some slip of the tongue, or that he would remain cloistered in the monastery and would be condemned based on a failure to appear. However, when Eutyches attended the Home Synod, he was not allowed to read his confession. According to Eutyches, he was suddenly condemned, and his testimony was altered in the minutes to make him appear heretical. Eutyches concluded that, after he was anathematized by

⁶⁸ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 55.

⁶⁹ Davis, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. The Liturgical Press, 1990, 175.

⁷⁰ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 156.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Bishop Flavian, he appealed and stands before the Council like Christ stood before Pilate and witnessed the good confession.

Bishop Flavian requested that Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum be allowed to challenge Eutyches since he had finished making his confession. Elpidius, the imperial commissioner, did not allow Bishop Eusebius to speak against Eutyches, reasoning that since Eutyches was merely making an appeal, there was no point in Eusebius repeating what was already said at the Home Synod of 448. One bishop required that the minutes of the Home Synod be read. St. Dioscorus asked the synod whether this was acceptable. Eighteen bishops demanded the reading. When St. Dioscorus asked the Roman legates how to proceed, Eutyches objected since Leo of Rome supported Bishop Flavian. St. Dioscorus heard the legates, who requested the *Tome of Leo* be read first.

Although St. Dioscorus ruled that the *Tome* be read after the minutes of the Home Synod, Leo's letter was never read. The legates made the request three times, but none in the council supported their request. Only St. Dioscorus desired to grant their request. Supposedly in response to an order of St. Dioscorus, the *Tome* was received by the chief notary, a presbyter, who, instead of reading it, said that there was another imperial letter addressed to St. Dioscorus to be presented in the council.⁷² Many of the Bishops in attendance were familiar with Leo's *Tome*, which declared that Christ was in two natures after the union. Some scholars posit that, since the bishops of the counsel protested when the account Seleucus of Amasia in the Home Synod's minutes were read, which say "Jesus Christ in two natures," St. Dioscorus likely did not want to shame Rome, who had only two delegates who could defend Leo's position. In other words, St. Dioscorus protected Leo from being called a heretic at this council.

After listening to the minutes of the Home Synod, St. Dioscorus asked the counsel to rule on Eutyches' case. After eleven bishops made oral arguments in defense of Eutyches, 122 of the 150 bishops voted to acquit him. In turn, the council turned against Bishops Flavian and Eusebius, condemning both. According to the Minutes of Chalcedon, St. Dioscorus framed the condemnation of Flavian and Eusebius, which resulted in 140 signatures anathematizing by the bishops in support:

The holy and great council convoked long ago at Nicaea according to the will of God defined our orthodox and irreproachable faith. The holy council that met here a short time ago confirmed it, and also decreed that it alone should be approved by the church as in force; it laid down that no one is allowed to compose another creed in addition to it, or to inquire or innovate, or raise anything at all regarding our holy religion. Those who try to hold or investigate or compose anything in addition to this, or attempt at all to reverse what has been defined, it subjected to various penalties: if they are bishops, they are to be expelled from the episcopacy; if clerics, from the clergy; if laymen, they are to be excommunicated – for this is what we have learnt from the minutes that have just been read. Since, moreover, as this holy and ecumenical council

⁷² Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 66.

recognizes, Flavian formerly bishop of the Church of Constantinople and Eusebius of Dorylaeum are seen to have stirred up and perverted almost everything, and have become a cause of scandal and turmoil to the holy churches and the orthodox congregations everywhere, it is clear that they have brought upon themselves the penalties which were then defined by our holy fathers in council. Therefore, in confirmation of this, we have delivered the judgment that the aforesaid Flavian and Eusebius are deprived of all priestly and episcopal dignity. Let each of the most religious bishops here present declare his own opinion for recording in the minutes. Everything that is transacted today will be made known to our most pious and Christ-loving emperors.⁷³

The counsel condemned the Home Synod of 448 for its Antiochene Christology. All in all, the second Council of Ephesus of 449 asserted the Alexandrian view of the Reunion of 433 as against the Antiochene interpretation which the Home Synod of 448 had owned.⁷⁴ However, outrage from Leo against St. Dioscorus regarding his *Tome* as well as desire from Emperor Theodosius II's successor to elevate Constantinople would lead to the Council of Chalcedon.

Pope Leo's Response to Ephesus 449

Leo of Rome denounced the council, giving it the famous misnomer "Council of Robbers" since his *Tome* was not read. Leo raised many baseless claims against St. Dioscorus, most famously that Dioscorus prevented the *Tome* from being read and used violence at the Council of Ephesus 449 to force the bishops to sign Bishop Flavian's condemnation. St. Dioscorus was the only person present at the council that asked for the letter to be read. On two separate occasions, St. Dioscorus asked for the presentation of Leo's *Tome*.

Despite St. Dioscorus' peace and candor towards the Pope of Rome, Leo wrote a letter to Theodosius II, complaining, and this time requesting another council to examine what had happened in Ephesus. Pope Theodosius II did not agree with Pope Leo's position, but wrote to him saying that the council was governed by the fear of God.⁷⁵ As we will see when studying the Council of Chalcedon and analyzing the minutes, these accusations against St. Dioscorus were flat out false. The accusations would range from signing blank papers to using an army of monks and soldiers to coerce the bishops into condemning Flavian. One accusation not made at the council was that Barsuma led a group of monks to attack Bishop Flavian during Ephesus. As we will see, none of these accusations were supported by evidence. Emperor Theodosius II knew that. In fact, Leo knew that as well. What was important for Leo was not that he gain some sort of justice or retribution for Bishop Flavian or Eusebius or anyone else for that matter, but rather that his *Tome* be read. The next emperor would call for the Council of Chalcedon and provide Leo an opportunity for his *Tome* to be sponsored as an article of faith.

⁷³ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 343-44.

⁷⁴ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 63.

⁷⁵ Malaty, Fr. Tadros Y. *A Panoramic View of Patristics in the First Six Centuries with an Overview of Selected Coptic Orthodox Fathers and Authors of the Middle Ages*. St. George's Coptic Orthodox Church, Sporting, Alexandria, Egypt, 2006, 62.

Chapter 3: Introduction to the Council of Chalcedon

Introduction

Two deaths following the Second Council of Ephesus 449 spelled bad news for St. Dioscorus and good news for Leo of Rome. The first was the death of Bishop Flavian almost immediately following the council. St. Dioscorus' enemies would eventually claim that Flavian died because of “rough treatment” at the council. Suddenly, the rumors against St. Dioscorus, however ridiculous, began to seem more credible, at least in the eyes of his accusers.

The second death was that of Emperor Theodosius II, who fell off his horse and broke his neck. His death on July 28, 450 paved the way for his sister, Pulcheria, to gain control of the Empire through her husband Marcian, who was declared emperor on August 28, 450.

Now that Marcian was emperor, Pulcheria had an opportunity to elevate the see of Constantinople by making a powerful ally out of Rome by taking out Alexandria. Knowing the situation between Leo and St. Dioscorus, she figured she could side with Rome and establish dominance. According to her plan, Rome would raise the status of the Bishop of Constantinople once Dioscorus was defeated. Pulcheria had Marcian write to Pope Leo of Rome, expressing the idea of convening a council with the purpose of undoing the second Council of Ephesus of 449.⁷⁶

On May 17, forty-five orders were issued to convene an ecumenical council in Nicaea. However, due to an invasion by the Huns, the council's venue was changed to Chalcedon.

The Imperial Commission

Unlike the three Ecumenical Councils, as well as the second Council of Ephesus, which were each called by the emperor and presided by a bishop, the council of Chalcedon was presided by an imperial commission made up of eighteen high-ranking officials.⁷⁷ These commissioners, also referred to as the senate, took votes, consented to what was brought forward, closed the sessions, and managed the business management of the assembly.⁷⁸ While they did not necessarily interfere with the decisions of the council and often understood that these were religious matters among bishops, they did nevertheless ask questions, examine the witnesses, and move the council along.

The Roman Legates

While the imperial commissioners moderated the meetings and presided over its administration, the Roman legates,⁷⁹ who represented Leo, Pope of Rome, acted as the true presidents of the meeting. The Roman legates were recognized by the council to be the superiors,

⁷⁶ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 72.

⁷⁷ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 118.

⁷⁸ Hefele, Charles. *A History of the Councils of the Church, from the Original Documents*. Vol. 3, AMS Press, 1972, 241.

⁷⁹ Legate is a word specifically denoting a delegate or representative of the Roman pope. Here, the words legate or Roman delegate will reference the same group.

having the first votes and threatening the council if the decisions did not go their way. In fact, the bishops at Chalcedon recognized that, through the Roman legates, Leo presided over the meeting, “Of whom you were chief, as the head to the members, showing your goodwill in the person of those who represented you.”⁸⁰

Before, Leo gave two reasons why he could not attend the second council of Ephesus in 449: (1) it was against precedent for the pope to attend and (2) Attila and his huns caused havoc in Italy.⁸¹ Although not commented on again, likely for those same reasons, Pope Leo decided to send legates instead of attending the Council of Chalcedon personally. No matter the reason, Pope Leo decided to send three legates whose leader was Bishop Paschasinus of Marsala in Sicily, who would be designated as “president” of the forthcoming council, advised by Julian of Cose, who tended to papal business in Constantinople.⁸² The other two legates were Bishop Lucentius and Presbyter Boniface.

The Sessions of Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon was broken into multiple sessions, but there is no official number. For the purpose of our discussion, we will focus on Sessions 1 to 5, which were held from October 8 to 22, 451. Session 6 will be mentioned briefly at the conclusion.

The first session, held on October 8, 451, focused on the minutes of the Home Synod, the Council of Ephesus 449, and parts of the Ecumenical Council of Ephesus, in order to unofficially depose St. Dioscorus. This session ended with the vindication of Bishops Flavian and Eusebius as well as the arrest of St. Dioscorus.

The second session, held on October 10, 451, was a review of the articles of faith accepted by Chalcedon, which included the Nicene Creed, the Constantinopolitan Creed, St. Cyril of Alexandria’s Second Letter to Nestorius, the Formulary Reunion, and the *Tome of Leo*.

The third session, held on October 13, 451, was the trial and deposition of St. Dioscorus, which concluded with his condemnation by the council.

The fourth session, held October 17, 451, was a continuation of the second session, in which the Egyptian Bishops and monks who supported Eutyches were examined. The *Tome of Leo* was also further examined.

The fifth session, held October 22, 451, was the drafting of the Definition of the Faith of Chalcedon.

The sixth session, held October 25, 451, concluded the Christological issues of the Council and was attended by Emperor Marcian.

⁸⁰ Synod of Chalcedon to Pope Leo. *Letter 98*. §1.

⁸¹ Davis, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. The Liturgical Press, 1990, 175.

⁸² *Id.* at 180.

Chapter 4: The First Session of Chalcedon

Introduction

The first session of Chalcedon was held on October 8, 451, in the nave of the church of St. Euphemia, with 343 bishops attending.⁸³ In this session, the council reexamined the cases against Eutyches, Flavian and Eusebius, as well as the charges raised against St. Dioscorus. Many of these are included in Leo's letter to Emperor Theodosius II. Since this session contains copious readings from the Home Synod, 448, the second council of Ephesus, 449, and even the Council of Ephesus, 431, it is an invaluable source for the minutes of all these meetings. For this reason, this section will also contain an in-depth analysis of the events of the two councils leading up to Chalcedon as they are contextualized through this council. As we will learn, this session will serve as a deposition of St. Dioscorus, which will be finalized with his mock trial in Session 4.

St. Dioscorus Immediately Accused

At the very beginning of the council, the Roman legate Paschasinus demanded that either Dioscorus leave or that they would leave.⁸⁴

When asked by the imperial commissioners why St. Dioscorus should be removed, the Roman legate asserted that "His entrance makes it necessary to oppose him." The minutes continue:

Imperial Commission: As we have already proposed, let the charge against him be specified.

Lucentius: He should render an account of his judgment. Although he did not possess the role of a judge, he usurped it. He presumed to hold a council without the leave of the apostolic see [of Rome], which has never been allowed and has never been done.

Paschasinus: We cannot go against the instructions of the most blessed and apostolic bishop who occupies the apostolic see, nor against the ecclesiastical canons or the traditions of the fathers.

Imperial commission: You need to make clear his specific offense.

Lucentius: We will not tolerate so great an outrage both to you and to us as to have this person taking his seat when he has been summoned to judgment.

⁸³ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 118.

⁸⁴ *Id.* at 129.

Imperial commission: If you are taking the role of a judge, you cannot in that capacity plead your cause.⁸⁵

Despite the Roman legates failing to make any case against Dioscorus, the saintly Bishop of Alexandria took a seat in the center, joining those who were accused.

There were two reasons Leo did this: (1) he already excommunicated St. Dioscorus, (2) he considered it easier to condemn St. Dioscorus than to condemn all the bishops of that council or even the entire council itself, and (3) it would remove him from his allies.

Regarding the first point, Leo had excommunicated St. Dioscorus. Why would one excommunicated now sit with the judges of the council? For Leo, whose legates were running the meeting, an excommunicated bishop could not sit with the rest of the Orthodox church in judgment of others who had been accused or deposed. But what really demonstrated St. Dioscorus' compassionate, peaceful character was that, although Leo excommunicated him, St. Dioscorus did not retaliate or excommunicate Leo as well. As we see here, St. Dioscorus decided to just sit among the accused and defend himself, as the Alexandria patriarchs learned from the martyrs before them.

Secondly, since it would be insurmountably difficult for Leo to refute an entire council, i.e. the Second Council of Ephesus 449, the Roman legates instead separated Dioscorus so they may be able to blame for the decisions at the Council of Ephesus, including the accusations of violence and the blank papers.⁸⁶ Instead of addressing the merits of a Christological dispute and the nuances of the differences between the Antiochene and Alexandrian views, this would allow St. Dioscorus' accusers to attack him personally by ascribing to him violent acts at Ephesus II. Defeating St. Dioscorus would remove one more obstacle between Leo and his ambition regarding his *Tome*.

Thirdly, moving St. Dioscorus to where the accused sat also meant that he was separated from those who supported him. By doing this, the Roman legates would be able to turn the council of Chalcedon against St. Dioscorus. As we will see, this tactic would succeed in causing many of his allies to abandon him.

Bishop Eusebius' Accusations of Violence against St. Dioscorus

Bringing the first accusation against St. Dioscorus, Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum insisted that Dioscorus treated him badly, saying, "I have been wronged by Dioscorus; the faith has been wronged; Bishop Flavian was murdered. He together with me was unjustly deposed by Dioscorus. Order my petition to be read."⁸⁷ This was in reference to the accusation made outside of Chalcedon that St. Dioscorus allowed a fierce man named Barsauma to lead a group of impudent monks to beat Bishop Flavian.

⁸⁵ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 129-30.

⁸⁶ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 77.

⁸⁷ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 130.

The council wished to move forward with reviewing the minutes from the Home Synod of 448 and the Second Council of Ephesus in 449, but St. Dioscorus insisted that “the matters of the faith be examined first.”⁸⁸ The council responded that St. Dioscorus must first answer the accusations made against him.

Further Accusations of the Violence and the Blank Papers

As was mentioned earlier, accusations were lumped against Dioscorus that he alone made the decisions at the Second Council of Ephesus 449, and that he had used force and duress in order to intimidate the bishops into signing the documents of the Council’s decision. Dioscorus properly argued against this accusation, clarifying that the Emperor gave the entire council authority to act:

We pronounced judgment accordingly, and the whole council gave its assent. Why are these people singling me out for attack? Responsibility was given to the three of us equally, and the whole council, as I have said, concurred with our judgment: it uttered its own sentence, it signed, and the matter was referred to the most pious emperor Theodosius of blessed memory, who confirmed all the judgements of the holy and ecumenical council by a general law.⁸⁹

The Oriental bishops were in an awful predicament since they were at Ephesus II with St. Dioscorus and had supported his decision to condemn Bishops Flavian and Eusebius. Having no other option, the Oriental bishops at Chalcedon accused Dioscorus of using threat of fear and force in order to make them sign blank documents that he used later to write the condemnation of Bishop Flavian. “No one concurred ” said the bishops. “Force was used, force with blows. We signed blank papers. We were threatened with deposition, exile, soldiers with clubs and swords stood by. We were intimidated into signing. This is why [Dioscorus] had soldiers with him. The soldiers killed Flavian.”⁹⁰ The Egyptian bishops disagreed saying, “They were the first to sign, why are they now shouting?”

Bishop Stephen continued the same accusations, saying that St. Dioscorus had summoned soldiers, monks, and three-hundred people to threaten him with death unless he signed the sentence of Dioscorus, Juvenal, and Thalassius. The Egyptian bishops refuted, eventually shouting “A Christian fears no one. An orthodox fears no one. Bring fire, and we shall learn. If they had feared men, there would never have been martyrs.”⁹¹ St. Dioscorus raised another defense:

Dioscorus: Since they say that they didn’t hear the sentences and decrees but simply signed a blank sheet passed to them, it was

⁸⁸ *Id.* at 132.

⁸⁹ *Id.* at 140.

⁹⁰ *Id.* at 141.

⁹¹ *Id.* at 143.

quite improper of them to sign without being assured about the pronouncements of the council, especially since matters of faith were at stake. Since they are making accusations that they were given a blank sheet to sign, who then composed their declarations? I ask your magnificence to make them answer.⁹²

The senate did not make anyone answer, but instead moved forward with reading the minutes of Ephesus 449. Not long into the reading, the minutes mentioned the bishops present at the council agreeing with St. Dioscorus. The Oriental bishops present at Chalcedon, hearing this, said, “We didn’t say this. Who said this?”⁹³

At this point, another accusation was raised against Dioscorus related to the blank papers: “Let him bring in his notaries, for he expelled everyone else’s notaries and got his own to do the writing. Let the notaries come and say if this was written or read in our presence, and if anyone acknowledged and signed it.”⁹⁴ Bishop Stephen shared his testimony of this event:

My own notaries, Julian who is now the most devout bishop of Lebedos and the deacon Crispinus, were keeping a record, but the notaries of the most devout Bishop Dioscorus came and erased their tablets, and almost broke their fingers in the attempt to snatch their pens. I didn’t get copies of the minutes, and I don’t know what happened next, but on the very day the investigation took place we signed the sheet, and the bishops who hadn’t signed it did so under my guarantee on the following day.⁹⁵

In response to Stephen’s claim, Dioscorus requested that Bishop Stephen’s testimony be read to determine whether he was forced to sign the condemnation of Bishop Flavian. The officials and senate decided to ignore this request and moved on with reading the minutes.

Assessing claims of violence against St. Dioscorus

As mentioned above, Bishop Eusebius accused St. Dioscorus of violence while the other bishops mentioned that he forced them to sign blank papers on which he could write the condemnations against Bishops Flavian and Eusebius.

Now the issue with this attack by Bishop Stephen, according to Fr. V.C. Samuel,⁹⁶ is that he admitted that the writing of the minutes had been done by the secretaries of the bishops themselves, and not by St. Dioscorus or his notaries. Continuing with this line of thought, the

⁹² *Ibid.*

⁹³ *Id.* at 152.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ *Id.* at 153.

⁹⁶ Fr. V.C. Samuel is an Indian Orthodox priest who wrote *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. According to Fr. Peter Farrington, this work is “perhaps the most important study of Christology and the Council of Chalcedon to be published in the 20th century.” His approach in this book is to avoid blame and suggest positive steps that can be taken to restore the unity which Orthodoxy once experienced. He reposed in 1998 after 60 years of dedicated service.

only possible objection to be made against the council of 449 would be that the bishops were not free to take down the minutes of the various incidents as they witnessed them. St. Dioscorus attempted to compare the various copies of the minutes of Ephesus 449, but was ignored.⁹⁷

Fr. V.C. Samuel raised two more points defending St. Dioscorus against the baseless accusations that he forced the bishops to sign the condemnation of Bishop Flavian of Constantinople under the threat of violence:

If all these stories of violence were true, nobody accused St. Dioscorus of acting alone. In fact, even Bishop Stephen said that Dioscorus, Juvenal, Thalassius, and “the other bishops” forced him to sign. Theodore stated that they had been the work of the “early signatories.” It is clear that the story as told by these bishops did not vindicate the Roman legates and the bishop of Dorylaeum regarding their assertion that Dioscorus had dominated the council.⁹⁸ In other words, many bishops were working together; it was not St. Dioscorus alone.

Commenting on these accusations that Dioscorus was violent, one Syrian Orthodox Bishop made the following remarks which can be broken into eight points:

- (1) The council was not held on the demand of St. Dioscorus, and there were no previous letters between the Alexandrian pope and the emperors, signifying that St. Dioscorus demanded no personal benefit;
- (2) The imperial letters did not describe St. Dioscorus with titles more honorable than others, meaning that there was no collusion between Dioscorus and the emperor;
- (3) The imperial letters revealed the increased theological troubles that spread in the See of Constantinople;
- (4) The decisions were accepted through voting, and no bishops fled the council save Flavian and Eusebius;
- (5) The opening of the council described Leo of Rome as a “saint” and “love of God,” revealing the spirit of the council;
- (6) When Pope Leo asked the emperor of the West, Valentinus, to intercede before Emperor Theodosius II, the latter sent them a letter praising the Council of Ephesus 449, stating that it was “controlled by the fear of God;”
- (7) In the imperial message at the opening of the Council, the emperor revealed the violence of Theodoret of Cyrus; and

⁹⁷ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 80.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*

(8) Until the last moment of the council, St. Dioscorus did not speak an evil word against Rome, while Leo in his epistles referred to the Pope of Alexandria as “that Egyptian plunderer” and “preacher of the devil’s errors” who tried to force his “villainous blasphemies” on his brethren.⁹⁹

Eutyches, Flavian, and Eusebius Reexamined

During the reading of the minutes of Ephesus 449, the Council exploded in an uproar when Eutyches’ confession was read, which contained a statement saying that he condemned all those that say “the flesh of our Lord and God Jesus Christ came down from heaven.”¹⁰⁰ St. Dioscorus, however, distanced himself from Eutyches, as follows:

If Eutyches holds opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church, he deserves not only punishment but hell fire. For my concern is for the catholic and apostolic faith and not for any human being. My mind is fixed on the Godhead, and I do not look to any person nor care about anything except my soul and the true and pure faith.¹⁰¹

It was at this point that Bishop Basil stumbled in his words and contradicted his own account.

When the minutes of the proceedings relating to Eutyches were read, there was read publicly the statement I made expressing agreement with the fathers who earlier met at Ephesus and approval of the letter of the most blessed Cyril who presided at that blessed council, in which he refuted the insane Nestorius who misinterpreted the creed of the 318 fathers. I asserted in my statement, as I still do now, that I worship our one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, God the Word, acknowledged in two natures after taking flesh and becoming man.¹⁰²

After clarifying what he meant by the above, the senate said, “If your teaching was so orthodox, why did you sign the deposition of Flavian of sacred memory?” Bishop Basil replied, “Because I was delivered for judgment to one hundred and twenty or thirty bishops, and forced to submit to their decision.” The senate later cross-examined Basil, saying, “yet you declared earlier that you were forced by violence and compulsion to sign the deposition of Flavian of sacred memory on a blank sheet.” Basil did not answer. Instead, the Oriental bishops cried out,

⁹⁹ Malaty, Fr. Tadros Y. *A Panoramic View of Patristics in the First Six Centuries with an Overview of Selected Coptic Orthodox Fathers and Authors of the Middle Ages*. St. George’s Coptic Orthodox Church, Sporting, Alexandria, Egypt, 2006, 62.

¹⁰⁰ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 158.

¹⁰¹ *Id.* at 159.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

“we all sinned, we all beg forgiveness” and the minutes were read. Fr. V.C. Samuel reads into this that perhaps the Oriental Bishops, along with Bishop Basil, were apologizing both for agreeing to excommunicate Bishop Flavian and for fabricating the story of the blank papers.¹⁰³

Dioscorus separates Himself from Eutyches

Perhaps more important is the comment made by Dioscorus above, that “if Eutyches holds opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church, he deserves not only punishment but hell fire.” First, what Bishop Basil had read into Eutyches was declared heretical by St. Dioscorus. Second, there was no evidence that Eutyches taught what Basil purported. Third, the real issue for St. Dioscorus is not the teaching of Eutyches, but rather the teaching of the Church,¹⁰⁴ since he continued “my concern is for the catholic and apostolic faith and not for any human being.”

The Formulary Reunion Examined

Soon enough, the council of Chalcedon began to read the Formulary of Reunion. All the bishops exclaimed in adoration and acceptance of St. Cyril of Alexandria, praising him and condemning those who “say two Sons, for we worship one Son, our Lord Jesus Christ the Only-Begotten.” The Oriental Bishops shouted that “Flavian believed this, defended this, and was deposed! Eusebius condemned the faith” and “Leo holds this, Leo believes this!”¹⁰⁵

The senate turned to St. Dioscorus and asked why he would acquit Eutyches, who did not accept the Formulary, but condemn Bishops Flavian and Eusebius who both accepted it. St. Dioscorus requested the reading continue. According to Fr. V.C. Samuel, since the Formulary had not yet obtained any synodical sanction, the question of the commissioners implied the assumption which had been the cause of the rift between the Alexandrians and the Antiochenes.¹⁰⁶

It was at this pivotal moment, however, that support for St. Dioscorus would quickly begin to dwindle. The council arrived at a reading of the minutes of Ephesus 449 where Bishop Eustathius of Berytus spoke regarding the proper interpretation of St. Cyril’s Formulary. He said that such proper reading required also the readings of those letters to Acacius of Melitene, Valerian of Iconium, and Succensus of Diocaesarea, which Cyril wrote to reassure his supporters of the accuracy of the Formula given an Alexandrian interpretation. In this, Bishop Eustathius summarized those letters as stating, “One should not conceive of two natures but of one incarnate nature of the Word,”¹⁰⁷ which was supported by writings of St. Athanasius the Apostolic.

Essentially, what Eustathius attempted to do here was present an Alexandrian interpretation of the Formulary against a council skewing the reading towards the Antiochene interpretation. This is why he clarifies the letter needs to be understood in the context of how St. Cyril defended it before his supporters. The issue was even more so that the Formulary was not

¹⁰³ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 82.

¹⁰⁴ *Id.* at 81.

¹⁰⁵ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. 2*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 183.

¹⁰⁶ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 82-3.

¹⁰⁷ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 185.

intended to have the authority that the Home Synod of 448 placed upon it, since Theodoret of Cyrus admitted it as an article of faith after providing an Antiochene interpretation of its content.

Dioscorus defended himself by saying, “We speak of neither confusion nor division nor change. Anathema to whoever speaks of confusion or change or mixture,”¹⁰⁸ since the Alexandrian interpretation of the Formulary had a proper understanding of the nature of Christ following the union. Since the Antiochene interpretation read into the Formulary an equivalence between *hypostasis* and *prosopon*, the council believed that interpreting the union any other way would lead to Apollinarianism. The Antiochenes believed that there must be two separate natures after the union in order to maintain the distinction between the human and divine, while the Alexandrians believed that Christ is from two natures without any mixing, mingling, alteration, or confusion. As a result, there continues to be a disagreement between the use of the phrases "in two natures" and "of two natures."

Bishops Flavian and Eusebius Restored

While St. Dioscorus’ defense was sufficient to silence the Oriental party, the commission further pressed Eustathius, which led to misstep that provided an opportunity for Bishops Flavian and Eusebius to be restored. Acting under the pretense that the Formulary was an article of faith, the senate asked Eustathius whether his declaration was in “harmony with the canonical letters of Cyril.” At first, Eustathius responded, “One should therefore not conceive of two natures but of one incarnate nature of the Word.” However, Eustathius misstated Bishop Flavian’s position and exonerated him by his own mouth:

Anathema to whoever says one nature in such a way as to abolish Christ’s flesh that is consubstantial with us, and anathema to whoever says two natures in such a way as to divide the Son of God. I want to speak on behalf of the blessed Flavian: the blessed Flavian took precisely these words and sent them to the most pious emperor. Have his autograph letter read, so that the whole council may say that it was accepted deservedly.¹⁰⁹

The senate, realizing that Eustathius contradicted his own words through his actions, asked why he would depose Bishop Flavian if he held the Orthodox faith. In shock, Eustathius blurted out “I erred!” Without skipping a beat, the following confession of Bishop Flavian was read aloud:

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, is perfect God and perfect man made up of a rational soul and body, begotten from the Father without beginning before the ages in respect of the Godhead, and the same at the end and in the last times for us and for our salvation born from Mary the Virgin in respect of the manhood, consubstantial with the Father in respect of the Godhead and consubstantial with his mother in respect of the manhood.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁹ *Id.* at 185-6.

For we confess that Christ is **from two natures** after the incarnation, as we confess in one hypostasis and one person one Christ, one Son, one Lord.¹¹⁰

The senate moved to ask the bishops present at Chalcedon whether or not Bishop Flavian had in fact made a Christological error. While many bishops agreed that Bishop Flavian was Orthodox, St. Dioscorus requested that the rest of the transcript be read since the testimony later contradicts itself by mentioning “two natures after the union.”

Although Bishop Flavian would later mention “two natures after the union” according to St. Dioscorus’ testimony, this expression “*from* two natures” as used here and used by Alexandria would be the same expression used in the first draft of the Definition of faith of Chalcedon. However, the council would instead use Leo’s expression “*in* two natures,” making the Definition of Chalcedon a faith the Alexandrians could not accept.

St. Dioscorus Condemned and Arrested

St. Dioscorus was not only ignored but also abandoned by Bishop Juvenal of Jerusalem and the other bishops who supported Bishop Flavian. These bishops even went so far as to switch sides and join St. Dioscorus' accusers. However, there was a huge issue with the readings of these two documents:

[Bishop Juvenal] expressed the view that the Formulary of Reunion and the statement of Flavian referred to by Eustathius looked alike. But the fact is that neither of these documents contained the “two natures after the union” which Eutyches had been asked to affirm by the synod of 448, that Juvenal also made the same mistake which Eustathius had committed.¹¹¹

St. Dioscorus attempted to clarify Bishop Flavian’s position and his own:

Clearly Flavian was deposed for this reason, that he spoke of two natures after the union. But I have quotations from the holy fathers Athanasius, Gregory and Cyril saying in numerous passages that one should not speak of two natures after the union but of one incarnate nature of the Word. I am being cast out together with the fathers. I stand by the doctrines of the fathers, and do not transgress in any respect. And I have these quotations not indiscriminately or in a haphazard form but in books. As all have asked, I too request that the rest be read.¹¹²

¹¹⁰ *Id.* at 186-7

¹¹¹ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 84-5.

¹¹² Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. One*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 190.

The council continued to read the minutes until the end of Ephesus 449, to which the imperial commission made its rule to restore Bishops Flavian and Eusebius, and to condemn St. Dioscorus and his party:

On the question of the orthodox and catholic faith we decree that a more exact examination must take place more completely when the council meets tomorrow. But since the injustice of the deposition of Flavian of devout memory and of the most devout Bishop Eusebius has been proved by the scrutiny of the proceedings that have been read and the spoken testimony of some of the leaders at the then council, who have confessed that they erred and that they had no reason to depose them since they had not erred in the faith, it appears right to us according to the will of God, if it please our most divine and pious master, that Dioscorus the most devout bishop of Alexandria, Juvenal the most devout bishop of Jerusalem, Thalassius the most devout bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Eusebius the most devout bishop of Ancyra, Eustathius the most devout bishop of Berytus, and Basil the most devout bishop of Seleucia in Isauria, who had authority at that council and directed it, should receive the same penalty from the sacred council and be excluded from the episcopal dignity in accordance with the canons. All these developments are to be reported to the divine head.¹¹³

As the Oriental bishops were exclaiming “this judgment is just,” St. Dioscorus was placed under arrest and taken away. “Christ has deposed Dioscorus! Christ has deposed the murderer! This is a just sentence! This is a just council! The senate is just! God has avenged the martyrs!” However, even while the bishops were cheering and St. Dioscorus was being escorted, the imperial commissioners gave a curious instruction to those bishops who would come the following day for session two:

Let each of the most devout bishops of the present holy council set out in writing what he believes, without any anxiety and with the fear of God before his eyes, recognizing that the beliefs of our most divine and pious master [Marcian] accord with the creed of the 318 holy fathers at Nicaea and the creed of the 150 fathers after that, with the canonical letters and expositions of the holy fathers Gregory, Basil, Hilary, Athanasius and Ambrose, and with the two canonical letters of Cyril (i.e. the Second Letter to Nestorius and the Formulary Reunion) which were approved and published at the first Council of Ephesus, and does not depart from their faith in any way. In addition it is a familiar fact that the most devout Leo archbishop of Senior Rome sent a letter to Flavian of devout

¹¹³ *Id.* at 364.

memory concerning the dispute that Eutyches impiously stirred up in opposition to the catholic religion.¹¹⁴

Conclusion of the First Session

This moment was significant since it not only foreshadowed what would happen the next day, but it provided the documents by which the Council of Chalcedon would articulate the faith. While there is no surprise that Nicaea and Ephesus are mentioned, this is the first time the Creed of Constantinople is mentioned. Besides this event, it also demonstrated that the Antiochenes placed the Formulary Reunion and Second Letter of Nestorius at the same level of the Nicene Creed as an article of faith. Most importantly, and most significantly regarding Chalcedon, we see the *Tome of Leo* mentioned among these. Thus, Pulcheria and Emperor Marcian provided the venue at which St. Dioscorus would become the sacrifice by which Leo would have an opportunity to introduce his letter as an article of faith. It must be stated that Pope Leo would ultimately fail since the Definition of the Faith of Chalcedon would become an article. However, his consolation prize would be that the Definition contains his *Tome*, at least in part.

¹¹⁴ *Id.* at 364-5.

Chapter 5: The Second Session of Chalcedon

Introduction

Session two set the stage for the *Tome of Leo* to determine whether it would be considered an article of faith for those who will go on to accept Chalcedon's decision. Session II and IV are essentially part 1 and 2 of Pope Leo's efforts to endorse and ratify his *Tome*. Session III will serve as the trial and deposition of St. Dioscorus.

It would be in this second session that the imperial commission would suggest that the synod select a committee to draft a Definition of Faith. The bishops scoffed and protested against this suggestion, but a few disappeared until the fourth council to work on a draft. This would subvert Pope Leo's plan in the fourth session, transforming the *Tome* from a declaration of faith to a reference in a conciliar work.

The second session met on October 10, 451, two days after the first session, and began with a recapitulation of the events that had occurred during the first session on October 8. The imperial officials reminded the bishops that, in their last meeting, Bishops Flavian and Eusebius had been restored, and that the bishops must now turn their attention to confirming the faith.

Articles of the Faith Read Aloud

The bishops of the council said, "No one makes a new exposition, nor do we attempt or presume to do so," reasoning that "it was the fathers who taught, what they expounded is preserved in writing, and we cannot go beyond it."¹¹⁵

From the beginning of the second session, the council began endorsing the *Tome of Leo*. One bishop immediately announced "There arose the affair of Eutyches. A decree was issued on the subject by the most holy archbishop of Rome; we assent to it and have all signed this letter."¹¹⁶

The imperial commission had a different idea. The idea was that each diocese would select a bishop to discuss the faith for the purpose of writing a common document to "make their decisions known to all." Outraged, the bishops responded that, according to one of the canons, another exposition of the faith cannot be written. One of the bishops announced that the faith was defined by the 318 at Nicaea and now by Pope Leo. The tension between the imperial commission and the bishops would be revisited during the fifth session. For now, the conversation ended while a few bishops disappeared to begin drafting the Definition of Chalcedon in the oratory.

From there, the Nicene Creed, Constantinopolitan Creed, St. Cyril of Alexandria's Second Letter to Nestorius, the Formulary Reconciliation, and the *Tome of Leo* were read aloud.

¹¹⁵ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 10.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

The Tome of Leo to be Revisited

The reading of the *Tome of Leo* was not a complete success for Pope Leo. Three passages were objected to, and one of the legates even requested more time to compare it to St. Cyril of Alexandria's Third Letter to Nestorius.¹¹⁷ Rome would need to use the time between the second and fourth sessions in order to prepare the *Tome* to be examined once more. This surprised Rome, who was convinced that all bishops present, upon hearing its words, would immediately accept it and celebrate it as the sincere expression of the true faith. Nevertheless, the Oriental bishops clamored and cheered:

This is the faith of the fathers. This is the faith of the apostles. We all believe accordingly. We orthodox believe accordingly. Anathema to him who does not believe accordingly! Peter has uttered this through Leo. The apostles taught accordingly. Leo taught piously and truly. Cyril taught accordingly. Eternal is the memory of Cyril. Leo and Cyril taught the same. Leo and Cyril taught accordingly. Anathema to him who does not believe accordingly! This is the true faith. We orthodox think accordingly. This is the faith of the fathers. Why was this not read out at Ephesus? Dioscorus concealed it.¹¹⁸

Conclusion of the Second Session

Almost immediately after, the bishops called for the exile of St. Dioscorus and the Egyptian bishops. The Illyrian bishops called for St. Dioscorus to be restored to the council. However, the clerics of Constantinople condemned those in communion with St. Dioscorus. After hearing the petition, the second session ended abruptly with a five day recess until St. Dioscorus could be judged.

¹¹⁷ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 87-8.

¹¹⁸ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 24-25.

Chapter 6: The Third Session of Chalcedon

Introduction

The third session of the Council of Chalcedon, which took place on October 13, 451, was the trial of St. Dioscorus. Although Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum brought at least four charges against him, and despite three summons made throughout the session, St. Dioscorus refused to appear.

The Empire Not Involved

The empire completely separated itself from the trial of St. Dioscorus, to the point that not even the imperial commission was present.¹¹⁹ Although the minutes began “in the consulship of our most pious and Christ-loving emperor Marcian, for the first time,”¹²⁰ the emperor was not present.¹²¹

By not appearing, the Emperor hoped that it would give a neutral disposition, favoring neither Alexandria nor Rome. The Emperor was far from neutral since he and his wife planned the Council to assist Pope Leo in hopes that an alliance would form, elevating the See of Constantinople to the height of Rome. This trial could have been avoided had the Emperor ratified the decision of the first session of Chalcedon, removing St. Dioscorus. The Emperor was aware that the Bishop of Alexandria had support from a few bishops and that he needed to win them over to his side, or at least cause them to lose faith in Alexandria’s position. In order to appear fair and win alliances, he allowed a complete trial to be held so St. Dioscorus’ sentence would neither be questioned nor appear to lack due process.

Many Bishops did not Attend St. Dioscorus’ Trial

It is possible that many bishops continued to support St. Dioscorus, while many more were just not interested or were not convinced that he was guilty of the charges piled against him. According to two separate lists, around 204 bishops attended the third session, while 192 gave verdicts condemning St. Dioscorus, while at least 350 to 370 were present at the council. Although, as discussed above, the numbers could be accounted for by individual bishops signing on behalf of themselves and (on behalf of) other bishops as well, this places anywhere from 158 to 178 bishops that (may have) continued to support St. Dioscorus. Given the number of attendees of the fourth session increased from 200 likely to 370, the sentiment among the bishops was that, while they supported undoing the Second Council of Ephesus 449 and accepting the *Tome of Leo*, many were uninterested and even opposed to condemning St. Dioscorus.¹²²

¹¹⁹ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 30.

¹²⁰ *Id.* at 38.

¹²¹ “The trial of Dioscorus at the third session had been conducted without the presence of the emperor’s representatives, to create the semblance of a fair trial and of episcopal independence.” *Id.* at 147, Fn. 32.

¹²² For a fuller discussion on this topic, see *Id.* at 35-37.

Bishop Eusebius' Accusations against St. Dioscorus

The third session began with Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum raising a three-fold petition against St. Dioscorus, accusing him of: (1) holding the same view as Eutyches, allowing him into communion before Ephesus 449, and propagating his teachings through Ephesus 449; (2) condemning Bishops Flavian and Eusebius through threatening bishops, making them sign blank papers, and writing the condemnations later; and (3) not reading the *Tome of Leo* at the Ephesus 449.

St. Dioscorus Separated Himself from Eutyches

As stated earlier, many of the charges against St. Dioscorus were unsubstantiated. First, St. Dioscorus did not claim to hold the views of Eutyches, but said in the first session that “If Eutyches holds opinions contrary to the doctrines of the church, he deserves not only punishment but hell fire.” Second, it was the bishops at Ephesus 449 who collectively voted in support of vindicating Eutyches and condemning Bishops Eusebius and Flavian. Third, while St. Dioscorus wanted to read the *Tome of Leo*, no one else would allow him.

Bishop Eusebius Never before Mentioned Blank Papers

Although Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum was present at the council in 449, his petition read to the council on October 8, 451, did not mention the story of the blank papers either at the time it happened or at the first session. But suddenly, two years later, he decided to bring this issue up for the very first time on October 13, 451. Why would he wait over two years to ever mention this, from the men who had signed the *Tome of Leo* and agreed to support it?¹²³

The First Summons of St. Dioscorus

The council of Chalcedon served three summons to St. Dioscorus. The first was taken to him by three priests, but he refused them saying that he was under arrest and could not be released from custody to attend the session unless he was granted permission.¹²⁴ While speaking to the bishops, St. Dioscorus learned that this session was to be his trial. When the bishops returned with permission to release him from custody, St. Dioscorus said he would not go to the session unless the imperial commission was present.

The Second Summons of St. Dioscorus

A second summons was served so that St. Dioscorus may stand trial and be condemned by Bishop Eusebius. This time, the council sent three bishops and one of the deacons who was a notary. Initially, St. Dioscorus told them he was sick, but they said he didn't seem sick the first time they saw him. St. Dioscorus again demanded that the imperial commission attend his trial. The bishops responded that his summons was canonical and that he could make the requests to the council personally.

¹²³ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 80.

¹²⁴ *Id.* at 90.

During this second summons, St. Dioscorus attempted to determine whether his trial would be regarding the actions of Ephesus 449, or whether the trial would be personally against him. In order to find out the purpose of his trial, he asked whether the other bishops being condemned with him, namely Juvenal, Thalassius, Eusebius, Basil, and Eustathius, would be put on trial as well. The bishops replied that no others were involved.

The individual nature of the trial was a major red flag for St. Dioscorus. If the trial was about what happened at Ephesus 449, then Juvenal, Thalassius, Eusebius, Basil, and Eustathius would have been on trial with him as well since they were just as responsible for the decision of that council. Since they were not involved, that would mean that the trial was personally against him. Reasoning that no imperial commission or laymen would be present and no one else was to be put on trial, this was to be a condemnation instead of a fair hearing. Learning the true nature of his summons, St. Dioscorus responded to the bishops, “I have said what I said once for all, and, in brief, I have nothing further to say.”¹²⁵

Upon hearing this, Bishop Eusebius charged the council to note on the record that St. Dioscorus was not allowed any excuses, and was not to use this as a tactic to force Eusebius to accuse any other person. The Bishop of Dorylaeum made it exceedingly clear that this trial was specifically against St. Dioscorus.

Baseless Accusations raised by the Alexandrian Clergy

As he was still saying these things, one of the notaries informed Bishop Eusebius that clergy from Alexandria had arrived. A priest named Athanasius, two deacons named Theodore and Ischyron, and a layman named Sophronius came to raise at least six additional accusations against St. Dioscorus: (1) he treated them poorly; (2) he opposed St. Cyril of Alexandria in theology and other matters; (3) he was a blasphemer, murderer, an arsonist, a demolisher of homes, and a destroyer of trees¹²⁶ who had always lived a shameful life stealing boats and having affairs; (4) he challenged the authority of the emperor; (5) he excommunicated Pope Leo of Rome; and (6) was despised by his flock in Alexandria.¹²⁷ Deacon Theodore complained that he had been serving twenty-two years since the time of St. Cyril of Alexandria, and that St. Dioscorus immediately removed him after becoming bishop of Alexandria. According to Deacon Theodore, he was removed solely because the deacon was friends with St. Cyril, and stated that St. Dioscorus hated even the family of Cyril.

The bishops of Chalcedon accepted these four testimonies without anything more than the assurance of the witnesses that they could support their claims. Specifically, the bishops said that these testimonies would need to be presented to St. Dioscorus so he may defend himself. This is very strange, considering that the accuser would need evidence in order to bring his claim against the accused.

¹²⁵ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 49.

¹²⁶ According to the minutes of Chalcedon, the exact language used was “a man who has not refrained...from cutting down trees.” See *id.* at 52. Tree cutting was mentioned again by Deacon Ischyron, see *id.* at 54.

¹²⁷ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 90-1.

Nevertheless, these baseless accusations didn't stand the test of time. Had it been true that St. Dioscorus lived a debauched life of sin, immorality, corruption, and destruction, then why was he so revered by Alexandria even after his death? Why would Alexandria esteem him as a saint, and the non-Chalcedonian churches accept him among the church fathers, celebrating him as both a martyr and confessor of the faith? The veracity of these testimonies, then, can only be equated to those accusations raised against St. Athanasius by the Arians who accused him of desecrating the altar, killing a priest and using his hand to practice divination, and interfering in the trade routes.

Fr. V.C. Samuel calls into question the accusation against St. Dioscorus that the Bishop of Alexandria had excommunicated Pope Leo. While many viewed this as a quid pro quo action since Pope Leo had excommunicated St. Dioscorus six months prior, the first mention of this unsubstantiated accusation came from Deacon Theodore's testimony that Dioscorus excommunicated the Pope of Rome. Even during the council when the Roman delegates and others charged St. Dioscorus, nobody ever mentioned him excommunicating Leo. Why would the excommunication of Leo be mentioned in the sentencing of St. Dioscorus, but never be mentioned until it was brought up without any evidence by Deacon Theodore? Bishop Eusebius had not brought it up either when he accused St. Dioscorus. This absence of evidence is significant since the primary condemnations against St. Dioscorus concerned the *Tome of Leo* and the excommunication of Leo. Fr. V.C. Samuel further comments that the Roman Delegates should have brought up the excommunication of Pope Leo when the imperial commission asked them in the first session to present their claim against St. Dioscorus. Clearly the excommunication of St. Dioscorus by Pope Leo was unilateral. There is no evidence that St. Dioscorus retaliated, and there was no evidence that he ever excommunicated the Pope of Rome.¹²⁸

The Third Summons of St. Dioscorus

After the bishops heard all four testimonies of the Alexandria clergy and layman, they decided to summon St. Dioscorus a third time since it was a requirement to the ecclesiastical order to be summoned three times. Three more bishops accompanied by a deacon went one final time to summon St. Dioscorus. As the three bishops and deacon attempted to convince St. Dioscorus to come, the Bishop of Alexandria continued to tell them "I have nothing to add to what I have already said." When compelled to attend in order to clear the holy church of God from stain, St. Dioscorus with boldness declared "The catholic church has no stain—God forbid! I know how I have responded to these injunctions!"¹²⁹ When pressed one final time, he said, "What I said I have said, and I am satisfied with it."¹³⁰

St. Dioscorus Canonically Censured according to Chalcedon

Upon hearing this, the bishops at the council imposed upon him censure according to the canons. One of the bishops remarked:

¹²⁸ For further reading on this topic, see *id.* at 92-93.

¹²⁹ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 67.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

When he murdered that most holy man Flavian, the guardian of orthodoxy, he didn't cite canons or have them read, nor did he follow any ecclesiastical procedure, but he deposed him on his own authority. But now everything has been decided canonically, and he ought not to have recourse again to a postponement.¹³¹

St. Dioscorus Condemned by the Council of Chalcedon

The council turned to the Roman delegates, led by Bishop Paschasinus of Lilybaeum in Sicily, who delivered a speech articulating his proposed order against St. Dioscorus:

Manifest are the deeds committed with lawless audacity by Dioscorus bishop of the city of Alexandria against the discipline of the canons and the rules of the church, as is shown by the past proceedings and the present pleas. To omit the greater part, Eutyches, who shared his perfidy and had been lawfully condemned by his own bishop, Flavian of holy memory, he is known to have received [into communion] even before sitting [in council] together with the bishops who had assembled in the city of Ephesus. To them, however, the apostolic see grants pardon, because they are proved to have done what was perpetrated against their will, in such a way that they still now adhere to both the most blessed pope and the ecumenical and holy council, and as a result have obtained the remedy of sacred communion.

The aforesaid, however, thinks it a matter of distinction to persevere in evil, when he ought, as is fitting, with bowed head and groans to be lying prostrate on the ground, because he did not even allow the reading of the letter of the most blessed pope written to Flavian of venerable memory, the priest of Christ; for when those who had brought it asked for permission to have it read, he spurned fulfilling his promise through keeping to his oath, with the result that the impiety of wicked doctrine was increased and harm and scandal were caused to all the churches.

We intended, however, to be lenient towards these outrages and to extend [to him] appropriately the mercy we had shown the other bishops, even though they are found not to have had the same responsibility for the judgment.

But he has greatly surpassed his first crimes with his later ones, and had the presumption to pronounce excommunication against the most holy and sacred Leo archbishop of Great Rome; there have also been presented to the holy and great council complaints of

¹³¹ *Id.* at 69-70.

accusers full of various charges; and although summoned a third time with a canonical admonition by our most devout brothers and fellow bishops, he spurned coming, held back by secret pangs of conscience. Since with lawless usurpation he also received [into communion] people lawfully condemned by the provincial council to which they were subject, he has brought down upon himself a sentence of condemnation, by frequently trampling on the decrees of the ancient fathers.

Therefore the holy and most blessed pope, the head of the universal church, through us his representatives and with the assent of the holy council, endowed as he is with the dignity of Peter the Apostle, who is called the foundation of the church, the rock of faith, and the doorkeeper of the heavenly kingdom, has stripped him of episcopal dignity and excluded him from all priestly functions. What remains is for the venerable council assembled to pronounce, as justice bids, a canonical verdict against the aforesaid Dioscorus.¹³²

In summary, the delegates of Rome condemned St. Dioscorus on the grounds that (1) he allowed into communion Eutyches after his condemnation at the Home Synod of 448 but before his restoration at the second council of Ephesus 449; (2) he continued in rebellion against the council; (3) he did not allow the *Tome of Leo* to be read at the council of 449, which resulted in great scandal in the church; (4) he excommunicated Pope Leo; and (5) he refused three summons to the third session.¹³³ This is the basis on which St. Dioscorus was excommunicated by Rome.

Letters Announcing St. Dioscorus' Excommunication

Letters were written to Emperors Marcian and Valentinian, to Pulcheria, to Dioscorus in prison, to the Alexandrian clergy, and to the public in general in the form of a notice. The letter written to St. Dioscorus does not mention any violation of heresy but only references violation of the "canons," as produced below:

On account of your contempt for the divine canons and your disobedience to this holy and ecumenical council, because, in addition to the other crimes for which you have been convicted, you did not present yourself even when summoned a third time by this holy and great council according to the divine canons to answer the charges brought against you, know that on the present thirteenth day of the month of October you are deposed from the episcopate by the holy and ecumenical council and deprived of all ecclesiastical rank.¹³⁴

¹³² *Id.* at 68.

¹³³ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 93-94.

¹³⁴ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 113.

Chapter 7: Why did Rome want to Excommunicate St. Dioscorus?

Introduction

At this point in our study, it is necessary to consider why Rome would so aggressively pursue and condemn St. Dioscorus. This section explores various flaws in the deposition of St. Dioscorus to find either the most accurate or best faith interpretation of Rome's intentions to remove this saintly Alexandrian Bishop.

First Two Flaws of St. Dioscorus' Condemnation

Fr. V.C. Samuel presents two flaws regarding the council's decision against St. Dioscorus. The first is that, essentially, this was a miscarriage of justice since St. Dioscorus was not allowed due process given he was called to stand trial a second time and any new charges would need to be brought before the imperial commission and the entirety of the bishops present.

Miscarriage of Justice

According to the council, he was guilty of "contempt for the sacred canons" and "refusal to obey the summons." But then the question still stands: what charges were being brought against St. Dioscorus that he had not previously stood and testified against? If Bishop Eusebius was bringing the first petition made during the first session before the imperial commission, then why would St. Dioscorus need to stand against the same accusations a second time? If the imperial commission was not present and half the council had dismissed itself, then why would St. Dioscorus stand on trial a second time? And if new accusations were raised against him, then shouldn't St. Dioscorus be afforded due process and a formal hearing before the imperial council and the entirety of the bishops attending Chalcedon? Given the injustice of the court and the questions and facts set above, the assembly was at fault since they did not justly depose St. Dioscorus.¹³⁵

Accusations not Specified

The second flaw presented by Fr. V.C. Samuel was that the "other offenses" which St. Dioscorus committed were never specified. While the council was keen on holding the canons to censure the absent bishop, the church had not previously done this in the other councils. When Paul of Samosata and Nestorius had been deposed and refused to come, their writings were still considered and a defense was provided to them. The councils did not immediately condemn them, but considered their positions and met the burden of demonstrating why their heresies were against the Church. St. Dioscorus was not provided this defense or charity. The Roman legates were afforded the right to be vague in their condemnation of St. Dioscorus since political support allowed them to rally the support of Alexandria's enemies.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ For further reading regarding this first flaw, see Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 95-96.

¹³⁶ For further reading regarding this second flaw, see *id.* at 96-97.

Ambiguity Regarding Eutyches returning to Communion

Another question to consider is the veracity of the claim asserting that St. Dioscorus had admitted Eutyches into communion following the Home Synod of 448 but before his reconciliation in Ephesus 449. Fr. V.C. Samuel challenges this point as vague. The term “communion” may mean many things. Did the claim mean friendship or fellowship and support? Or did the claim instead mean that someone in the diocese of St. Dioscorus gave communion to Eutyches? Never once did the bishops raising these allegations provide facts or evidence demonstrating that Eutyches took communion. An event or day was never specified. The allegations were made broadly without any facts or evidence. Along the same lines, Fr. V.C. Samuel argues that, even if St. Dioscorus did allow Eutyches to partake in eucharistic fellowship after his condemnation but before his restoration, Pope Leo was guilty of the same charge since he allowed Theodoret of Cyrus to be restored prior to Chalcedon. While there are facts in evidence demonstrating that Theodoret was restored, such as his attendance at Chalcedon, there are none demonstrating that St. Dioscorus had accepted Eutyches into Eucharistic fellowship.¹³⁷

Relationship between St. Dioscorus and Pope Leo

We must also consider the relationship between St. Dioscorus and Pope Leo. For some reason, Leo decided that Rome and Alexandria would be enemies. Perhaps it was jealousy since the patriarch of Alexandria was preeminent among the fathers at Nicaea and Ephesus, even wielding power and influence at Constantinople.¹³⁸ Perhaps it was something merely personal.

While Leo sent his *Tome* to many bishops throughout the east, he never sent a copy to Alexandria. Despite not receiving a copy, St. Dioscorus was the only person present at the council of 449 who was interested in reading the *Tome*. While St. Dioscorus was nothing but kind to Leo, the Bishop of Rome had nothing but negative things to say about St. Dioscorus, calling him the “Egyptian plunderer” and the “preacher of the devil’s errors” who taught “villainous blasphemies.” While St. Dioscorus treated Leo very fairly, the Bishop of Rome excommunicated the Bishop of Alexandria less than one month before the council in 451.¹³⁹

Conclusion

All in all, Fr. V.C. Samuel concludes that the one reason and only reason that Pope Leo condemned the Bishop of Alexandria was simply that St. Dioscorus refused to sign the *Tome of Leo*.

¹³⁷ For a further discussion on this topic, see *id.* at 97-98.

¹³⁸ Actually, at Constantinople, it was the Alexandrian patriarch Timothy I along with the Roman legate who deposed St. Gregory of Nazianzus who was supposedly consecrated bishop for Constantinople against the Canons of Nicaea.

¹³⁹ See Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 99.

Chapter 8: The Fourth Session of Chalcedon

Introduction

After finally ridding themselves of St. Dioscorus, the Roman Legates focused their efforts on rallying support for the *Tome of Leo*. However, as the council voted and signed the *Tome*, those who refused to sign were examined. This included five bishops who supported St. Dioscorus, the Egyptian bishops, and the monks who had supported Eutyches. Ultimately the imperial commission decided that the Egyptian bishops did not need to state their support at that time until a bishop of Alexandria was consecrated for them. The session concluded when the council accepted the *Tome of Leo* as consistent with the articles of faith previously listed.

Reviewing Articles of the Faith

On October 17, 451, 305 bishops gathered for the fourth session of Chalcedon. Unlike the previous session, this one was attended by the imperial commission. When the bishops were seated, the commission asked that the previous decision be read. After the decisions of the first two sessions were read, in which the council restored Bishops Flavian and Eusebius, and affirmed their recognition of the Nicene Creed and Constantinopolitan Creed, the Second Letter of St. Cyril of Alexandria to Nestorius, and the Formulary Reunion as articles of the faith, the imperial officials asked the bishops what they had resolved regarding the faith. The Roman Legates further embraced the above documents, but moreover declared that the *Tome of Leo* declared the true faith.

The Examination of the Tome of Leo

The imperial commission decided at this point to take a vote among the bishops to determine whether they agreed if the “definition of the 318 fathers who met formerly at Nicaea and of the 150 who convened subsequently in the imperial city is in harmony with the letter of the most devout Archbishop Leo.”¹⁴⁰ 161 Bishops declared their support and signed the *Tome of Leo*. The imperial commission asked regarding the other bishops who had not announced their support. The minutes do not articulate which bishops further assented, but simply “all the most devout bishops”¹⁴¹ agreed and assented. To the synod’s surprise, the Roman legates called for the five bishops who had supported St. Dioscorus, namely Bishops Juvenal of Jerusalem, Thalassius of Caesarea in Cappadocia, Eusebius of Ancyra, Basil of Seleucia in Isauria, and Eustathius of Berytus, to be restored.

Examination of Five Bishops who Supported Dioscorus

At some point between October 10 and 17, 451, the five bishops mentioned above signed the *Tome of Leo*.¹⁴² Hence, the legates called for their restoration. The imperial commission

¹⁴⁰ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 127.

¹⁴¹ *Id.* at 146.

¹⁴² Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 103.

interrupted, stating that they had submitted this matter to Emperor Marcian. They also addressed the deposition of St. Dioscorus without their knowledge:

We have referred the matter to our most divine and pious master, and we await the response of his piety. But your devoutness (Emperor Marcian) will render an account to God regarding Dioscorus, who was deposed by you (Emperor Marian) without the knowledge of the most divine head and of ourselves, and regarding the five on whose behalf you are interceding, and all the proceedings at the holy council.¹⁴³

The bishops of Chalcedon, understanding the imperial commission's statement as a challenge, exclaimed "God has deposed Dioscorus! Dioscorus has been justly deposed! Christ has deposed Dioscorus!"¹⁴⁴ Since the imperial commission assented to the decision of the bishops, it essentially ratified the decision of the third session, making it a decision of the Council.

Within a few hours, the imperial commission declared that Emperor Marcian assigned judgment of the five bishops to the Council. When the council demanded they enter, the imperial commission ordered that the five be restored, saying, "We invite them to enter! Those of the same belief to the council! The like-minded to the council! Those who have signed the letter of Leo, to the council!"¹⁴⁵

Examination of the Egyptian Bishops

The council now turned its attention to the Egyptian bishops. Of the twenty who attended the first session, thirteen were now present: Hieracis, Sabinus, Apollonius, Pasmius, Januarius, Eulogius, John, Isaac, Hero, Stephen, Theophilus, another Theophilus, and Isidore. While not all seven absentees may be accounted for, four of them had spoken in favor of Bishop Flavian in the first session. However, no Egyptian bishop attended the second or third sessions since St. Dioscorus, their archbishop, was absent.¹⁴⁶

As Fr. V.C. Samuel put it, the thirteen Egyptian bishops were in a most "embarrassingly delicate situation."¹⁴⁷ Their archbishop had just been deposed, and the bishops knew Egypt was not going to accept the decisions of this council. All their hope was placed in a carefully worded petition that was submitted to the imperial commission.

When the Egyptian bishops were seated, the imperial commission asked whether they had presented a petition. The Egyptian bishops submitted their petition, which contained their thirteen signatures. The petition was then read aloud in the council:

¹⁴³ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 146-147.

¹⁴⁴ *Id.* at 147.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁶ *Id.* at 148.

¹⁴⁷ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 103.

The orthodox faith which from the beginning has been handed down to us by our holy and inspired fathers, St Mark the evangelist, the celebrated bishop and martyr Peter, and our holy fathers Athanasius, Theophilus and Cyril, who is among the saints, this we too preserve, this we advocate as the disciples of their confession, and this we hold, in accordance with the definitions of the 318 at Nicaea and of the most blessed Athanasius and Cyril, who is among the saints. We anathematize every heresy—those of Arius, Eunomius, Mani, Nestorius, and of those who say that the flesh of our Lord is from heaven and not from the holy Virgin Mary the Theotokos, being like us in all things except sin—and in addition every heresy that holds or teaches what is alien to the catholic church.¹⁴⁸

By stating “being like us in all things except sin,” the Egyptian bishops quoted St. Paul, who said, “For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (He. 4:15), as an indirect way to distinguish themselves from Eutyches while avoiding the language of the Formulary Reunion. Moreover, this petition did not contain the name Eutyches or an express acceptance of the *Tome of Leo*.¹⁴⁹

Despite their surgical wording and sincere attempt at remaining neutral, the bishops of the council asked why they had not anathematized the doctrine of Eutyches. Concluding that the Egyptian bishops had presented their petition deceitfully, the bishops of the council demanded they sign the *Tome of Leo*, which would anathematize Eutyches. Bishop Hieracis, on behalf of the Egyptian bishops, responded to these demands, saying:

If anyone holds different beliefs than those presented by us in the petition, either Eutyches or anyone else, let him be anathema. Regarding the letter of the most holy and God-beloved Archbishop Leo, all our most holy fathers know that in all matters we await the decision of our most sacred archbishop; we beg your philanthropy to await the decision of our president, for we will follow him in everything. For this was laid down in a canon by the 318 holy fathers who assembled at Nicaea, that the whole Egyptian diocese should follow the archbishop of the great city of Alexandria and that nothing should be done without him by any of the bishops under him.¹⁵⁰

This was not satisfactory. Bishops shouted that the Egyptians were lying. The council demanded proof. They demanded the Egyptian bishops publicly anathematize the doctrine of Eutyches, and further pressed the Egyptians as to whether they accepted Leo’s *Tome*. The council

¹⁴⁸ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 148.

¹⁴⁹ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 104.

¹⁵⁰ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 149-150.

also cried that, if these Egyptian bishops do not “know what they believe,” then surely they cannot elect for themselves a bishop. Nevertheless the Egyptian bishops remained steadfast, saying that they cannot sign without approval of the archbishop. The Egyptian bishops said:

We have already in a petition made our faith plain and have been seen not to hold beliefs contrary to the catholic faith. But since the most religious bishops of our diocese happen to be very many, while we, being easy to count, are not able to represent them, we entreat your pre-eminence and this holy and great council to have pity on us and wait for our archbishop, so that we may follow his decision according to ancient custom. But if we do anything without the approval of our leader, the whole Egyptian diocese will attack us as acting uncanonically and as not keeping but abolishing the ancient customs according to the canons. Have pity on our old age, have pity, and do not force us to end our lives in exile.¹⁵¹

Bishop Cecropius of Sebastopolis responded without any mercy, citing the twelve-hundred bishops we mentioned previously at the introduction to our discussion on the Council of Chalcedon:

The ecumenical council is greater than the Egyptian diocese, and more worthy of respect. It is not right that ten heretics should be heard and one thousand and two hundred bishops be ignored. We don't require them to express now their own faith on behalf of others, but we are telling them to assent to orthodoxy in their own person.¹⁵²

The council would not accept the argument from the Egyptians that since they were few, and that their archbishop had been deposed, they could not possibly represent all the bishops in Egypt. Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum reasoned that, since these bishops were delegates and representatives of all of Egypt, they must agree with the Council of Chalcedon. Bishop Lucentius, echoing Bishop Cecropius, asked how ten bishops could stand against 600. The Egyptian bishops continued pleading for their lives, prostrating, begging for mercy, saying they will be killed.

We shall die, by your feet; have pity on us. Let us die at your hands and not there; let us have an archbishop, and we shall sign and assent. Have pity on these gray hairs; let us be given an archbishop. The most God-beloved Archbishop Anatolius knows that the custom that has prevailed in the Egyptian diocese is that all the bishops obey the archbishop of Alexandria. We are not disobeying the council, but we shall be killed in our native land; have pity on us. You have the power; we submit, we do not disobey. It is preferable for us to die at the hands of the master of

¹⁵¹ *Id.* at 151.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

the world, of your pre-eminence and of the holy council than there. For God's sake have pity on these gray hairs; spare ten men.

You have power over our lives; spare ten men. We shall die there; it is better to die here. The emperors are merciful. Archbishop Anatolius knows the custom. This is our position until we have an archbishop. Do they want our sees? Let them take them, we have no wish to be bishops; only let us not die. Produce an archbishop, and if we put up opposition, then punish us. We shall obey what your authority decrees, we shall not resist; but choose an archbishop. We shall wait here until he is appointed.¹⁵³

At this point, the imperial commission intervened, ruling that the Egyptians did not refuse to sign out of disagreement of faith *per se*, but rather because they did not have an archbishop. The imperial council found the request to postpone this matter until a new bishop could be ordained for Alexandria to be reasonable, on the condition that the Egyptians remain in the imperial city until such appointment. The Roman legate demanded that securities be provided to ensure that they would not return to Alexandria in the meantime. The imperial commission allowed for either securities to be provided or an oath to be taken.

Examination of Monks who Supported Eutyches

Finished with the Egyptian bishops for now, the council turned to those monks who had supported Eutyches. The monks demanded that St. Dioscorus be restored. When they refused to accept the *Tome of Leo* or condemn Eutyches, they were handed over to the jurisdiction of the patriarch of Constantinople.¹⁵⁴

Conclusion

In this one session, the Roman legates succeeded in (1) rallying support for the *Tome of Leo*; (2) having the empire officially recognize and endorse the deposition of St. Dioscorus; (3) holding the Egyptian bishops at the imperial city until a bishop for Alexandria could be appointed to them; and (4) handing over the monks that supported Eutyches to the patriarch of Constantinople.

¹⁵³ *Id.* at 152.

¹⁵⁴ Davis, Leo Donald. *The First Seven Ecumenical Councils (325-787): Their History and Theology*. The Liturgical Press, 1990, 184.

Chapter 9: The Fifth Session

Introduction

During the second session of Chalcedon, held on October 10, 451, the chairman insisted that a pure exposition of the faith be drafted.¹⁵⁵ The bishops had unanimous disapproval against it. However, when the council reconvened on October 22 for the fifth session, the draft of the Definition was read by deacon Asclepiades. The draft of the Definition was edited out of the minutes of Chalcedon, likely so critics could not use the earlier draft to attack the Definition.¹⁵⁶ One of the bishops, unsatisfied with the draft Definition, said that it needed to be more precise. The Roman legates didn't take well to this, saying:

The definition satisfies us all. This is the faith of the fathers. Whoever holds a view contrary to this is a heretic. If anyone holds a different view, let him be anathema. Drive out the Nestorians. This definition satisfies everyone. Let those who do not anathematize Nestorius leave the council.¹⁵⁷

Dispute over omission of the title *Theotokos*

The bishops called for this Definition to include the expression “Holy Mary the *Theotokos*.” The Roman legates, being overly dramatic, said if the council didn't like the definition, then they would go back to Rome and the council would end right then and there. This was a direct threat to the imperial commissioners, who, in a panic, drew up a committee to finalize the Definition.¹⁵⁸ The council on the other hand, forced by the hard stance, decided that the Definition was satisfactory and orthodox. In fact, Bishop John lost all patience, falling into a frenzy, shouting and anathematizing the Nestorians. He could not imagine signing a document lacking the title *Theotokos*.

Distinguishing St. Dioscorus and Leo

During this commotion, the imperial commission, upon hearing the first draft of the definition read, began to argue with the bishops. “Dioscorus said that the reason for Flavian's deposition was that he said there are two natures, but the definition has ‘*from* two natures.’”¹⁵⁹ Bishop Antolius of Constantinople quickly said, “It was not because of the faith that Dioscorus was deposed. He was deposed because he broke off communion with the lord Archbishop Leo and was summoned a third time and did not come.”¹⁶⁰ This did not reflect well on the integrity of those bishops.

¹⁵⁵ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 184.

¹⁵⁶ *Id.* at 196.

¹⁵⁷ *Id.* at 197.

¹⁵⁸ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 106.

¹⁵⁹ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 198.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

Whether to accept the first draft of the Definition of Faith

Turning from this question, the imperial commission asked the bishops whether they accepted the *Tome of Leo*. When the council assented that they had accepted and signed it, the commission declared that its contents must then be included in the Definition. The bishops were up in arms. “Another definition must not be produced” retorted Bishop Eusebius of Dorylaeum. The rest of the bishops joined, saying that the Definition confirms the *Tome of Leo*, and that it was time to sign the Definition. Fr. V.C. Samuel explains that the point made by the bishops here is clear. In their draft, they had included the *Tome of Leo* as an acceptable document, so that they expected the same courtesy from Leo by recognizing the orthodoxy of their draft. This obviously means that the eastern bishops did not accept the *Tome* as their doctrinal standard.¹⁶¹

As the secretary declared that a committee would be appointed to redraft and finalize the Definition, Rome insisted that the Definition be read out, and that anyone who dissents should leave. The Bishops of Illyricum shot back, saying that the dissenters are Nestorians, and that the dissenters should go back to Rome.

A Committee Appointed

Recognizing that the council was falling into chaos, the imperial commission asked a question to get the council back on track:

Dioscorus said, “I accept ‘from two natures’, but I do not accept ‘two’.” But the most holy Archbishop Leo says that there are two natures in Christ, united without confusion, change or separation in the one only-begotten Son our Savior. So whom do you follow—the most holy Leo, or Dioscorus?¹⁶²

Fr. V.C. Samuel commented that the question was thoroughly unexpected, and the bishops were completely nonplussed.¹⁶³ Composing themselves, they responded, “We believe as Leo does! Those who object are Eutychianists. Leo’s teaching was orthodox.” Receiving the answer they wanted, the imperial commission replied, “Then add to the definition in accordance with the decree of our most holy father Leo that there are two natures united without change, division, or confusion in Christ.” With that, a committee was formed after all, which immediately went into the oratory to deliberate among themselves.

According to Fr. V.C. Samuel, the statement of the commissioners which elicited the bishops’ surrender implies the reading that St. Dioscorus had opposed the affirmation of a union of the two natures without confusion, change, and separation. This, in fact, was an unjustifiable distortion. For, on October 8, namely fourteen days before this incident, St. Dioscorus stated unequivocally that there was a union of the natures, which did not bring about confusion, change,

¹⁶¹ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 107.

¹⁶² Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 200.

¹⁶³ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 108.

division, and mixture. At Chalcedon, it was St. Dioscorus who was the first to affirm it, thereby anticipating the adverbs of the Chalcedonian definition itself.¹⁶⁴

Definition of the Faith of Chalcedon Completed

After the bishops returned from their deliberation, the final version of the Definition was read to the council, which in pertinent part said:

Following, therefore, the holy fathers, we all in harmony teach confession of one and the same Son our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhead and the same perfect in manhood, truly God and the same truly man, of a rational soul and body, consubstantial with the Father in respect of the Godhead, and the same consubstantial with us in respect of the manhood, like us in all things apart from sin, begotten from the Father before the ages in respect of the Godhead, and the same in the last days for us and for our salvation from the Virgin Mary the Theotokos in respect of the manhood, one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, acknowledged **in two natures** without confusion, change, division, or separation (the difference of the natures being in no way destroyed by the union, but rather the distinctive character of each nature being preserved and coming together into one person and one hypostasis), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, Only-begotten, God, Word, Lord, Jesus Christ, even as the prophets from of old and Jesus Christ himself taught us about him and the symbol of the fathers has handed down to us.¹⁶⁵

Although the bishops signed the Declaration, concluding the fifth session, there was no argument or debate regarding the expression “in two natures,” bolded above. Fr. V.C. Samuel comments on this, saying that the eastern critics of the council saw in it a betrayal of the already established norm of faith. The supporters of the council tried to make out that the phrases mean the same idea. If this was the truth, then there was no real difference between “from two natures” of St. Dioscorus and “in two natures” of the council. If that were the case, then with a little bit of patience from the triumphant party, the division could have been avoided.¹⁶⁶

According to J.N.D. Kelly, this final form of the Definition is a “mosaic” of excerpts from Cyril’s second letter to Nestorius and the Formulary, the *Tome of Leo*, and Flavian’s profession of the faith. Fr. V.C. Samuel comments that the Definition of Chalcedon attempted to unite the Formulary Reunion to the Home Synod of 448 to the Council of Chalcedon of 451, but remained vague enough to be accepted by all parties. The issue with this flexibility and

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁵ Price, R. M., and Michael Gaddis. *The Acts of the Council of Chalcedon, Vol. Two*. Liverpool University Press, 2007, 204.

¹⁶⁶ Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 109.

vagueness was that the definition was inadequate to conserve the doctrinal heritage of the Church.¹⁶⁷

While the expression “*from two natures*” was actually included in the first draft of the Definition, likely since this was Bishop Flavian’s confession, the final Definition includes the phrase “*in two natures*” because of Pope Leo’s *Tome*. As we said, *hypostasis* was used by the Chalcedoneans as a synonym for *prosopon*. Both are used here to express the “*oneness of the Person, thereby distinguishing it once for all from physis, which it reserved for the natures.*”¹⁶⁸

So why was *hypostasis* accepted by Chalcedon, yet Alexandria did not agree? As we mentioned in the beginning of our study, the Chalcedoneans and non-Chalcedoneans agreed on the term *hypostasis*. The issue really was more on how to define the word. The Chalcedoneans are fine with *hypostasis* as long as it means the same thing as *prosopon*. However, if *hypostasis* or *hypostatic union* implies a union of two natures or that Christ is *from two natures*, then the Chalcedoneans have a problem. The Chalcedoneans are afraid that if the two natures unite *hypostatically* in Christ, there will be change, alteration, or absorption, like Apollinarianism.

Since the Definition of Chalcedon embraces this idea, the Oriental Christians reject the faith of this council, being called non-Chalcedoneans. For Alexandria and the rest of the Oriental Christians, the incarnation was not the union of two abstract realities. Christ becoming man was a concrete reality. The hypostatic union was the humanity joined to the divinity in Christ, who, being God, became man, without alteration, change, mingling, confusion, or absorption. How, then, can there be two *prosopon* after the union in Christ? For this reason, Chalcedon did not conserve the Orthodox faith according to the Alexandrians.¹⁶⁹

Coptic Synaxarium Account of St. Dioscorus

The Coptic Synaxarium provides a different account of what occurred to St. Dioscorus leading up to the council’s decision to endorse the Chalcedonian Definition of the faith. Most Coptic, as well as Syrian sources, contain accounts of St. Dioscorus suffering persecution at the hands of Emperor Marcian and Empress Pulcheria.

According to such accounts, St. Dioscorus was summoned to the Council of Chalcedon by Emperor Marcianus. When he saw the bishops in attendance, St. Dioscorus asked, “In whom is the faith lacking that it was necessary to gather this great assembly?” The bishops responded, “This assembly has been convened by the Emperor’s command.” St. Dioscorus told them, “If this assembly has been convened by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ, I shall stay and speak with what God may give me to say; but if this assembly has been convened by the emperor’s command, then let the emperor manage his assembly as he pleases.

When St. Dioscorus heard Leo’s teaching that Christ had two natures and two wills after the Union, he asserted that Jesus Christ was one. Emperor Marcian and Empress Pulcheria were

¹⁶⁷ *Id.* at 110-111.

¹⁶⁸ Kelly, J.N.D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Revised Edition. Harper & Row, Publishers 1978, 341.

¹⁶⁹ For further reading on this topic, see Samuel, Father V. C. *The Council of Chalcedon Re-Examined*. British Orthodox Press, 2001, 317-318.

informed regarding St. Dioscorus' opposition to Leo's teaching. They summoned St. Dioscorus and other leading bishops of Chalcedon to debate before them. St. Dioscorus remained steadfast in the Orthodox faith, defending it until the evening. The Empress commanded that St. Dioscorus be smitten on his mouth, and that the hairs of his beard be plucked out. According to this account, St. Dioscorus took the hair that had been plucked out along with teeth that had fallen after he was smitten and sent them to Alexandria, saying, "This is the fruit of faith."

When St. Dioscorus returned to the council of Chalcedon, the bishops saw what had happened to him and were afraid. They endorsed the Definition of the Faith,¹⁷⁰ fearing they would otherwise suffer the same fate as St. Dioscorus. Seeing what was happening, St. Dioscorus requested that the document be given to him to sign. When St. Dioscorus received the document, he wrote below the names of the bishops that those who accept this Definition are excommunicated. The Emperor became enraged and commanded St. Dioscorus to be banished to the island of Gangra so the council may be concluded without him.¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ It is uncertain whether the document here refers to the Definition of the Faith according to the Council of Chalcedon, or whether it was the *Tome of Leo*, as is sometimes portrayed in Coptic art. The main characteristic of this document is that it expresses the belief that Christ is *in two natures* following the Union.

¹⁷¹ See the Coptic Synaxarium entry for Tout 7, the Departure of St. Dioscorus, the 25th Pope of Alexandria.

Chapter 10: Aftermath and Reconciliation Efforts Today

The Council of Chalcedon adjourned on November 1, 451. The council, according to Emperor Marcian, had succeeded in deposing Eutyches as an Apollinarian, and declared St. Dioscorus to be the same. On February 7, March 13, and July 28, 452, Emperor Marcian issued a series of decrees, which Fr. V.C. Samuel summarizes below:

Apollinarians, namely Eutychians (of which St. Dioscorus was numbered according to the Emperor), wherever they may be found, following earlier emperors, shall not have the right to execute a will, or to inherit according to the provisions of wills. Whatever is left for them by others will be forfeited. They should not ordain bishops or priests or other clergymen. Their bishops and clergy shall be liable to expulsion and their properties to be confiscated. They shall not build churches or monasteries; they shall have no assemblies or meetings by day or by night; they shall not meet in any private house to “celebrate their deadly rites;” if they do this with the consent of the owner, that house or estate shall be confiscated. They shall not write anything against the council; if they do, they shall be exiled perpetually, and their books shall be destroyed.¹⁷²

Emperor Marcian exiled Eutyches, who died around the time the decree was made. He also exiled St. Dioscorus to Gangra in Paphlagonia until his death in 454. He was celebrated by the people of Alexandria as a confessor and a martyr.

Aftermath of St. Dioscorus’ Exile

Following the exile of St. Dioscorus, Egypt fell into chaos. The Empire had ordained a new patriarch, Proterius,¹⁷³ to be the first Melkite patriarch of Egypt.¹⁷⁴ Military force was used against the Egyptians, which resulted in possibly thousands of martyrs.¹⁷⁵ Despite military force, the Egyptians would not accept Proterius as their patriarch. When Emperor Marcian died in 457, the Alexandrians consecrated St. Timothy II as the successor of St. Dioscorus. Over the course of the following centuries, the Church of Alexandria would suffer strife from the Melkite or government church.

The Henotikon

After Chalcedon to today, Orthodox Christians from both sides of the divide have worked together towards Reconciliation. One such effort was the *Henotikon*, which means “the act of

¹⁷² *Id.* at 121.

¹⁷³ Proterius was the archpriest who St. Dioscorus had entrusted with the administration of the see during his absence of Chalcedon.

¹⁷⁴ Ishak, Fr. Shenouda M. *Christology and the Council of Chalcedon*. Outskirts Press, 2013, 510.

¹⁷⁵ Bishop Youanis mentions that an unknown source estimated that 24,000 were martyred, mostly bishops, priests, and monks. See Youanis, H.G. Bishop. *The History of the Coptic Church After Chalcedon 451-1300 AD*. Shenouda Press, 2018, 13.

union” or “the creed of union.”¹⁷⁶ It was a theological formula sponsored by Emperor Zeno in 482 AD, put forward with the purpose of healing the schism of Chalcedon. It declared the three Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus to be standards of faith, received St. Cyril of Alexandria’s *Twelve Anathema*, and anathematized Nestorius and Eutyches.¹⁷⁷

It avoided the phrases “*In two natures*,” stating that Christ is “*one and not two*,” and that the miracles and sufferings of Christ are of a single person. It anathematized anyone who held any other opinion, whether at Chalcedon or in any synod whatsoever. Although it did not explicitly condemn Chalcedon, it minimized the council to only focus on the condemnation of Nestorius and Eutyches.¹⁷⁸ The *Henotikon* was accepted in the East, but was ultimately rejected by Rome.¹⁷⁹ Despite such efforts, reconciliation could not yet be reached between the Chalcedonian (Eastern or Byzantine) and non-Chalcedonian (Oriental) churches.¹⁸⁰

Reconciliation Efforts Today

The churches continue dialogues today with the purpose of coming to a common understanding of the faith, reconciling, and becoming once more the one, holy, catholic, apostolic, Orthodox church of God, confessing “one Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5).

Ignorance of the remarkable advance towards the eventual reunion of the “two families” is still widespread and it is a sad reflection on the lack of understanding of what has been agreed already that some journals, commenting on the recent reception of the British Orthodox Church by the Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate, are still impugning the Orthodoxy of the Oriental Orthodox churches with accusations of the Monophysite heresy.

There is, of course, always the zealot fringe, which has rather foolishly and improbably attempted to stigmatize the deep and careful deliberations of the Joint Commission as just another step in the liberal, ecumenist sell-out, preferring—for its own reasons—to re-open old wounds rather than pour out the healing balm of charity and truth. In accordance with the Bulletin’s declared policy of explaining our common understanding of the Orthodox faith, we published in this issue the key texts issued by the Joint Commission.

For over fifteen hundred years the Eastern (Byzantine) Orthodox churches and the Oriental Orthodox churches have remained separated. About sixty years ago they came together for the first of four unofficial theological consultations: Aarhus (1964), Bristol (1967), Geneva (1970) and Addis Ababa (1971).

These were followed by the establishment of a Joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches, which has held

¹⁷⁶ *Id.* at 17.

¹⁷⁷ Ishak, Fr. Shenouda M. *Christology and the Council of Chalcedon*. Outskirts Press, 2013, 64-65.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁰ The Oriental Churches include the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Armenian Apostolic Church, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the Malankara Syrian Orthodox Church of India, the Syrian Orthodox Church, and the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

four meetings: Chambesy, Geneva (December 1985), Anba Bishoy monastery, Egypt (June 1989), Chambesy II (September 1990), and Chambesy III (November 1993).

Second Meeting of the Joint Commission, 1989

From June 20 to 24, 1989 the second meeting of the joint Commission of the Theological Dialogue between the Orthodox Church and the Oriental Orthodox Churches took place at the Anba Bishoi Monastery in Wadi El-Natrun, Egypt.

The official representatives of the two families of churches of the Orthodox Churches met in an atmosphere of warm cordiality and Christian brotherhood for four days at the guest house of the Patriarchal residence at the Monastery, and experienced the gracious hospitality and kindness of the Coptic Orthodox Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria and his church.

His Holiness Pope and Patriarch Shenouda addressed the opening session of the meeting and appealed to the participants to find a way to restore communion between the two families of Churches. They then signed the First Agreed Statement on Christology, while at the same time acknowledged the common understanding of the work of the Holy Spirit and the faith of the one undivided church in the early centuries.

One year later, a Second Agreed Statement was released. This condemned the Eutychian heresy, the Nestorian heresy. It also affirmed the faith of St Cyril of Alexandria and the *mia physis* formula:

The Orthodox agree that the Oriental Orthodox will continue to maintain their traditional Cyrillian terminology of “one nature of the incarnate Logos” (“*mia fusij tou qeou Logou sesarkwmenh*”), since they acknowledge the double consubstantiality of the Logos which Eutyches denied. The Orthodox also use this terminology. The Oriental Orthodox agree that the Orthodox are justified in their use of the two-natures formula, since they acknowledge that the distinction is “in thought alone.”
[...]

It also recommended practical steps:

- A. The Orthodox should lift all anathemas and condemnations against all Oriental Orthodox Councils and Fathers whom they have anathematised or condemned in the past.
- B. The Oriental Orthodox should at the same time lift all anathemas and condemnations against all Orthodox Councils and fathers, whom they have anathematised or condemned in the past.
- C. The manner in which the anathemas are to be lifted should be decided by the Churches individually.

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